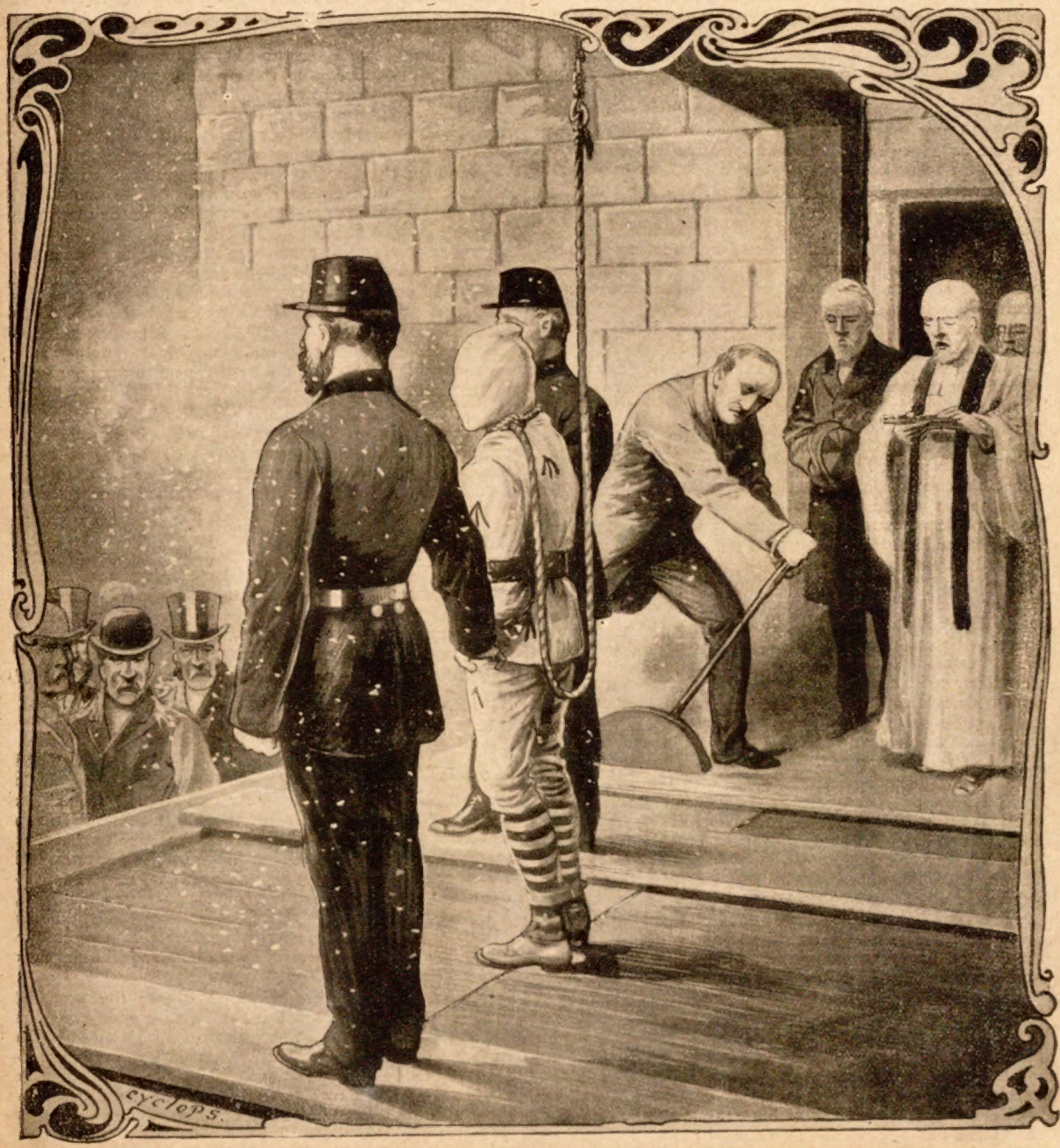
POLICE · BUDGET · EDITION

EDITED · BY HAROLD FURNISS

FAMOUS CRIMES

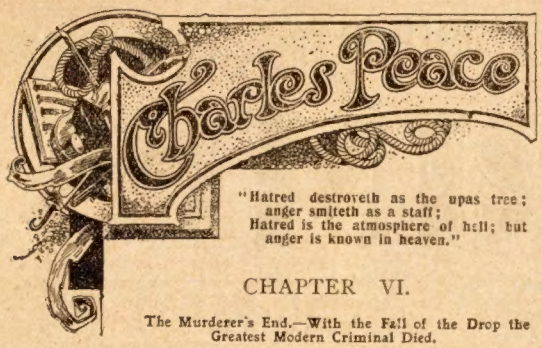
PAST AND PRESENT

ONE · PENNY



CHARLES PEACE ON THE SCAFFOLD.

Vol. I.—No. 6.



"Hatred destroyeth as the upas tree; anger smiteth as a staff; Hatred is the atmosphere of hell; but anger is known in heaven."

CHAPTER VI.

The Murderer's End.—With the Fall of the Drop the Greatest Modern Criminal Died.

CHARLES PEACE sat in the condemned cell, brooding over the events in his life. Things which seem harmless in the broad light of day bear a totally different aspect when considered in the sombre gloom of the prison; matters which appeared to be rather things to boast of were items of grave import to the man who now lay under the very shadow of the gallows.

The injuries which he had sustained were almost cured, for the law takes good care that its victims perish only in the way ordained, and the highest medical skill had been called in to ensure that Peace should live to make the last walk to the scaffold.

During the days of waiting—waiting for the blackness of the tomb to fall on him—Peace had several interviews with his friends and relations, and though he kept a brave heart while his visitors were present, he relapsed into a state of despondency when they left him. Every tick of the clock brought him nearer to his doom.

Whether from weakness or because he wished to excite pity, Peace said that he was unable to stand during the first few days after he was condemned to death, and whenever a friend visited him he had to be lifted into a chair close to the bars of the cage in which he lived.

Then his strength improved, and he was able to move about his confined quarters without assistance. Day and night he was watched by the lynx-like eyes of the warders. Every movement was noted, almost every breath counted, lest he should cheat the vengeance of the law at last.

On February 24, Mrs. Peace, Willie Ward, the convict's half-son, and Mr. and Mrs. Bolsover, relations, went to Armley Gaol to have a final interview with the condemned man. They found him engaged in writing a letter. He was cheerful, but obviously much afraid, though he disguised the fact as much as he could. When he saw that his friends were likely to break down he asked them to restrain themselves as much as possible for fear he should be upset. He said that he was very happy and comfortable, and that he hoped soon to be at rest. The first piece of business which he had to transact was to make proper arrangements for the disposition of his goods, and he said that he had instructed his solicitors to prepare a special deed of gift so that his relations might receive his estate without having to wait for the probate. He then said that Mr. Brion had been to see him, and acknowledged having in his possession a suite of drawing-room furniture, the model of the ship-raising apparatus, a cockatoo and cage, and several other articles which he was willing to give up to Mrs. Peace at once.

After talking about his business affairs for some little time, Peace turned to the question of Mrs. Thompson, the woman whom he had ruined. She was, he said, addicted to drink, and could not be trusted, but he wished her well. In his opinion, the best thing that could happen to his late mistress was that she should be sent to prison for a short time, so as to break her of her craving for stimulants. These moral reflections, coming from the mouth of a convicted murderer, are edifying, to say the least of it.

Reverting to the matter of his personal goods, he said that there was a small model, or monument, that he had made when at Peckham which should be seized. He also spoke of his flute-walking-stick. Both of these articles are now in the possession of Madame Tussaud, and can be seen in the Chamber of Horrors. The model is a beautiful piece of work, and one fails to understand how it was that a man with the horrible instincts of Charles Peace could have the tastes to make such a delicate article. The flute-walking-stick is a bamboo cane fashioned so as to act as a walking-stick as well as a flute, but its most important duty was to conceal the "jemmy" with which the prisoner opened houses. It is well made, and the tone of the flute is not at all impaired by the use to which it was put from time to time.

While the convict was talking thus to his relatives he heard the sounds of workmen hammering.

"Those are the men at work on my own scaffold," he remarked to the distressed visitors, smiling, and saying that it did not trouble him in the least. They had not noticed the ominous sounds, but on his speaking they could faintly distinguish the noise of carpenters at work.

"No, that is nothing of the kind," remarked the sympathetic Chief Warder, who was present; "that is the carpenters mending one of the plank beds."

"That's all very well," replied Peace. "I have not worked with wood for all these years without knowing what the carpenters are at. They are working on deal, and what would they be doing with deal if they were not making my scaffold?" (In this, it may be mentioned, he was wrong, since the principal parts of the scaffold are made of oak, as will be explained later.)

"It does not matter much to me," continued the condemned man. "I should like to see my own coffin and my grave. It would not make the slightest difference to me, because I am prepared. I only look upon the scaffold as a short cut to heaven. I shall be thrown into my grave as a dog is buried; but that is nothing. My body is nothing; my soul will be in heaven. What happens to my poor body matters nothing."

This speech, it can well be understood, affected the hearers very much, and they found it absolutely necessary to retire lest they should cause the convict to break down; but before he allowed his relations to leave he told them that he had made plans of the premises at Manchester on which he shot Constable Cook, so that there could be no doubt as to the genuineness of his confession.

Then he commenced to take his final farewells. Starting with his daughter, he asked her if there was anything she wished to ask him or to say to him. She was too overcome to reply, and he proceeded to each of the relatives then present. At the end Mrs. Peace said that she had much to say to him, but that was not the time to say it.

"But you will never see me again," said the condemned man. "What is it you have to say?"

"Last time we were here you promised to pray with us. Will you do so now, Charlie?"

"Certainly!—at once!" he answered. Then he asked the warders to assist him to kneel down, and for more than half an hour he prayed for all whom he had robbed, for those he had killed and for their relations, for his friends and for all his family, and lastly for himself; but his most earnest petitions were reserved for young Habron, who had served two years penal servitude for him. Very little conversation took place when the convict rose from his knees, for all were terribly depressed, as well they might be by such a scene, and after a short time they were permitted to shake hands with Peace through the bars and bid him their last farewell on earth.

Other relatives were admitted to see the wretched criminal during the Monday, but he took good care that their stay was short. Then he went on writing. One remark he made to his brother, Dan Peace, is worth recording. After the usual chat regarding family matters, Dan could not help turning the conversation on to the approaching execution. Peace said that he hoped to be strong enough to walk to the scaffold, but he was afraid that his great weakness might prevent him.

"Yes," replied Dan, "I should like thee to be able to walk. Stand it like a man."

"Dan, thee knows I shall do all that if I can," was the convict's rejoinder. After Peace had exhorted his brother to "become religious" the interview was stopped by the warders, for they saw that the convict was becoming exhausted.

Left alone to himself, the unfortunate man sat dazed for some time, and then asked that his lawyer might be sent to him. Presently Mr. Deputy Sheriff Ford came, and Peace made his last will, revoking those which he had previously made. All his property he left to Hannah Ward, or Peace, his wife. Then he parted from his solicitor for the last time.

He tried to read, but the words on the pages spelt "gallows"; he tried to talk, but through the cell doors he could hear the sound of workmen, and he knew that they were only working for one purpose.

He took his evening meal with evident gusto, and then sat down to read. As the night advanced he prepared to sleep, but he found that he could not rest. Towards midnight the Governor of the gaol (Mr. Keene) visited him, and remained with the condemned man till shortly after one, when his place was taken by the chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Cookson, who stopped with the wretched criminal till he was sufficiently drowsy to sleep.

It was about two in the morning when Peace fell into his last slumber on earth, and was not awakened till a quarter to six on the day of execution. The instant he was awake the chaplain, who had been spending the night praying for the poor soul about to be launched into eternity, joined him, and strove to bring him into a fitting frame of mind to meet his Maker.

When the convict was dressed breakfast was brought up to him. He had requested that he might have bacon and eggs, toast and tea, and, in deference to his wishes, these were provided for him. Peace made a good meal—indeed, he ate well from the moment of his conviction—and then turned his attention to the chaplain, who was most anxious to assist the culprit in any way he could. The weakness of the previous days seemed to have disappeared, and Peace was able to walk almost as well as in the days of his prime.

From an early hour in the morning a crowd began to assemble outside the prison, eager to see the black flag hoisted at 8 a.m.

Only a few privileged spectators were admitted to the prison, four being representatives of the Press. They entered the gaol at a quarter before eight, and were at once conducted to the scaffold, which had been erected in an angle of the hospital, for in those days Armley Gaol had no regular execution shed. There they found the usual apparatus for the despatching of the condemned. For the benefit of those who do not know what the gallows is like, we will describe it.

The essential parts of the dreadful instrument are a pair of trap-doors and a cross-beam, from which the rope depends. The trap-doors are made of three-inch oak planking, and the hinges are so arranged that when a certain lever is pulled they both fall together. The doomed man is placed so that the crack between the traps is exactly under the hollow of his feet. In prisons where executions are fairly frequent the beam is built into the wall, but where they are rare then upright pieces of wood have to be adjusted, so as to support the great log of timber from which the murderer hangs. The cross-beam is about ten inches square. Attached to it is a chain, with a hook, to which the rope is fastened before the last procession enters the shed of death.

PEACE TAKES LEAVE OF HIS WIFE AND MRS. THOMPSON.

The rope itself varies according to the executioner and the subject on whom he has to exercise his horrid craft. In the majority of cases it is three-quarters of an inch in diameter before it has been stretched, but after it has been tried once or twice it is reduced to five-eighths of an inch.

On the day prior to an execution the hangman arrives at the prison and inspects the scaffold, if it is a fixed one, and if it is not, watches it being put up, taking good care that all is in proper order. As soon as the structure is complete he produces his rope, which he fixes to the beam; then, in the presence of the doctor, who supplies him with the weight and height of the convict, he calculates the drop,

and adjusts the rope so that the poor felon shall fall exactly the prescribed distance. Sometimes he has to go and have a look at his prospective victim through the trap in the door, so as to get a fair idea of the build of the man he is called on to hang.

That done, he calls warders, who make up bags of cement to the exact weight, which are placed on the drop, attached to the rope, and the drop released several times, the object being to see if the drop is acting properly, and to test the rope, lest it should break. This finished, the executioner re-sets the drop with the assistance of the warders, finally adjusts his rope, and locks the door of the execution shed or padlocks the lever until the following morning, when he will have to open it to perform his dreadful office.

Marwood, though quite sure that all was as it should be, unlocked the lever in the early morning, and again tested the ropes, so as to make certain of avoiding any unnecessary agony on the part of the wretched criminal.

The morning was fair till about a quarter to eight, when a snowstorm burst over the northern town; then the clouds

The Under-Sheriff read the sentence of death.

darkened the sky, and the snow fell in large white flakes. At this moment the prison bell commenced to toll, and its mournful booming was heard by those who remained at home as well as by those who were sufficiently hard-hearted to come out to learn of a murderer's death.

At a quarter to eight, Marwood, the executioner, was introduced into the condemned cell, and at once proceeded to pinion the culprit. He passed a broad leather belt round his waist, to which the arms were secured by smaller straps which engaged them above the elbows and at the wrists. At that moment Mr. Under-Sheriff Gray and the Governor of the prison entered the cell, and the former, addressing the convict, said:

"Charles Peace, have you anything to say before you are led to execution?"

"Nothing!" remarked Peace. It was a dull morning, the flickering gas-jets in the corridor serving to do little more than make darkness visible. Then the Under-Sheriff read the sentence of death to the criminal—an unnecessary proceeding which only tends to add to the condemned man's mental distress—and the chaplain commenced to read the solemn service for the burial of the dead.

There is something awful in hearing the service for the dead read over the living—over a man whom in a few moments society is about to judicially slay.

Peace turned an ashen grey as the chaplain commenced the ritual, but he soon recovered himself, and took his place in the procession which was formed for the dread march to the scaffold. First came the chaplain in his surplice and stole, reading, with scarcely suppressed emotion, the beautiful words with which the Church of England commits her sons to the tomb. Following him came the culprit, pinioned, and escorted by two stalwart warders; but, weak as he was, he managed to do without more than the slightest assistance, and shuffled manfully to his doom. Close on his heels came Avenging Justice, in the form of Marwood, the hangman, rather nervous, and clutching from time to time the white cap which he carried in his pocket. Then came the Under-Sheriff, the Governor of the gaol, and the Chief Warder, walking abreast. The little procession was closed by a small knot of warders, ready to render any help if required.

The gallows, as we have said, was erected in an angle of the hospital ward, only about twenty yards in a direct line from the condemned cell, but owing to the construction of the building the prisoner had to walk the whole length of the corridor—some eighty yards—and then cross the yard to the scene of his death. Building operations were going on at the time, so that even when out of doors the procession could not take a direct route, but had to skirt the walls of the prison, in full sight of the gallows.

The falling snow rendered the ground very slippery, and from time to time the wretched convict stumbled, and had to be kept from falling by the attendants. The north wind whistled through the yard, and as it struck the doomed man he shivered.

The scaffold was a temporary structure built of blackened wood, six feet high from the ground, and standing over a pit of the same depth. Its front was hung with black sacking, and it looked a dreadful erection—forbidding, repulsive. In the breeze a new rope dangled from the great cross-beam, and as it swayed it caught the prisoner's eye, and fascinated him. For a second he almost lost his self-control, and turned to the warders with a piteous expression, but the momentary shock was over, and he continued his march to death firmly.

Nearer and nearer he approached to the scaffold and he listened to the words of the chaplain: "Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, so soon passeth he away and he is gone." With what fearful force these words must have impressed Charles Peace!

Beside the gibbet stood four or five men; they were the representatives of the Press and the prison doctor. The steps were reached, and the culprit was helped up them, for they were coated with ice. He was followed on to the platform by the officials and the chaplain.

Marwood immediately placed him underneath the beam, with his feet across the crack of the drop, and then the executioner knelt down to strap Peace's legs together. A miserable object was the great burglar at that moment, standing, bound, shivering, and almost bloodless, on the brink of the tomb. He was then no hero; the thought of his many escapades afforded him no comfort, for at last he realised the truth of the Scripture dictum—"He who sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Nor do we want to make of him a hero, but we would point to him as a warning that, however clever the criminal may be, the time comes when the law has her revenge.

Gone was the bravado, gone the impudent sneer and the swagger which had so long distinguished the criminal. Peace looked what he was—a man prematurely aged by vice, trembling at the doom which had overtaken him; a pitiless, helpless, cringing coward; the destroyer of women, the bully about to meet his deserts.

THE MELANCHOLY PROCESSION THEN SET OUT.

Marwood stretched up his hand and took down the fatal rope; then he placed the white cap on the criminal's head.

"Stop a minute!" cried Peace. "I want to hear this!"

"Lord have mercy upon us!" read the clergyman.

"Christ have mercy on me!" responded Peace.

Again the hangman tried to put the cap on his head and to end the horrid scene, but Peace excitedly exclaimed that he wanted to address the Press. Through the walls of the prison came the murmuring of the voices of the ten thousand who had assembled to hail the death of the murderer.

"You gentlemen reporters," he said, "I wish you to notice the few words I am going to say. You know what my life has been. It has been base, and had I wished to ask the world, after you have seen my death, what man could die as I die if he did not die in the fear of the Lord.

"Tell all my friends that I feel sure that they sincerely forgive me, and that I am going into the kingdom of heaven, or else to that place prepared for us to rest until the Day of Judgment.

"I have no enemies that I feel to have on this earth. I wish all my enemies, or those that would be so, I wish them well. I wish them to come to the kingdom of heaven at last.

"And now, to one and all, I say good-bye; heaven bless you, and may you all come to the kingdom of heaven at last. Amen.

"Say that my last respects is to my dear children and to their dear mother. I hope that no paper will disgrace itself by taunting them and jeering them on my account, but will have mercy upon them. God bless you, my children; my children each good-bye, and heaven bless you. Good-bye, and Amen!"

When this extraordinary harangue was finished Marwood again came forward with the white cap with which to blindfold the convict, but Peace repelled him, saying, "Can I have a drink? I want a little water." No attention was paid to this request, and the executioner drew the cap over Peace's head. Then he put the noose round his neck, and drew it fairly tight, adjusting the brass ring just behind the left ear. The condemned man from under the cap again asked for a cup of water, and he cried out to Marwood that the rope was too tight and hurt him. "It is better so!" whispered the hangman; "it will save you suffering."

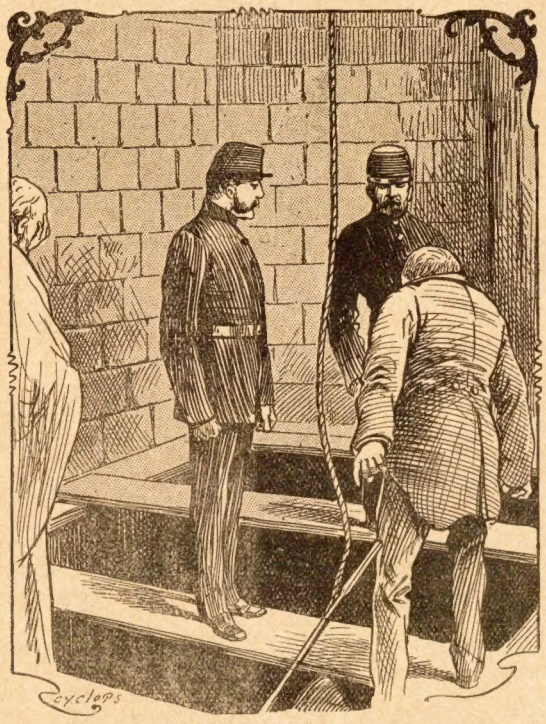
"Almighty God have mercy on me!" ejaculated Peace;

Marwood pinioned Peace's legs.

and then added, "I should like to have a drink." A trembling fit next seized the convict, and again he asked for a drink, and complained that the rope was too tight.

"Keep still!" said Marwood; "I won't hurt you a bit!" For a second there was silence, save for the voice of the chaplain, who was reading the service—"In the midst of life we are in death; to whom may we seek for succour but to Thee, O Lord?" As the chaplain was commencing the next paragraph—"I am the resurrection and the life"—Marwood drew the bolt, and the massive doors of the drop fell. The rope ran out to its full length, and there was a slight rebound. Marwood glanced into the pit, and smiled grimly. He had done his work effectively, for there is only a rebound when the neck is broken and death ensues at once.

As a matter of form, the doctor went behind the black sacking and felt the still pulse of the hanging man, but the



There was a slight rebound of the rope.

ceremony was a mockery. The burglar and assassin was no more, and but a mass of lifeless clay dangled from the gallows. Peace was dead!

In accordance with his theory, the executioner had given the culprit a drop of nine feet four inches, a fall which today would be considered far too long, for Marwood was "the apostle of the long drop." Death was absolutely instantaneous, and the malefactor could not have felt his end at all.

Two warders were left on duty to "guard" (save the term!) the remains for an hour, and the other officials and spectators went home, sickened by the awful sight they had witnessed and by the evident hypocrisy of the late convict.

At nine o'clock the corpse was taken down from the gallows tree and laid in a shell. There was little alteration in the features, and but for a blue mark round the throat Peace might have died a natural death. Twelve men were summoned to sit on the body and determine what was the cause of death, though all knew full well that "sus. per coll." was the verdict to be written in the prison books. The inquest over, all that remained of Charles Peace was placed in a rough coffin, the lid of which was perforated with large holes. Round the body a quantity of quicklime was put, and when the rude box had been lowered into an unhallowed grave more lime was shaken round it. Two warders poured water over the whole till the lime was active, and then the tomb was filled in. Thus perished the greatest villain of the nineteenth century, his mouldering carcase not being considered even fit food for worms.

Lest any should think that we applaud the career of Charles Peace, let us repeat again that he was a coward, a bully, a blackguard, and a braggart. His cunning was phenomenal, but it was excelled by his hypocrisy. He perished, as he lived, vilely. But from the history of every man there is something to be learnt, and from the career of Peace we are compelled to admit that

"The mills of God work slowly, yet they grind exceeding small."

—LONGFELLOW, "Retribution."

Every criminal thinks he has a chance of escape, but if he lives long enough he is sure to be captured, and forced to pay the penalty to the law he has contemned.

WAS MRS MAYBRICK GUILTY?

SEE NEXT WEEK'S NUMBER.

Manufacturing Beggars.

THE trade of manufacturing cripples is systematically carried on in Russia, where professional mendicants horribly mutilate children in such a way as best to excite the pity of almsgivers, and thus to gain substantial profits from the sufferings of the little ones.

It is reported that at the annual fair at Podkamia, in Russian Poland, last year the attention of all present was drawn to a little girl, about six years old, who was in the company of an aged beggar. The girl was totally blind, was lame in one leg, had a broken arm, and was covered with sores. Her pitiable appearance touched the heart of everyone who saw her.

Among the charitable donors was an old woman, who, in putting a coin into the child's hand, said: "Pray, little one, for my lost niece, Kittie."' "I am Kittie," was the unexpected reply of the girl.

The aged beggar was arrested, and the investigations of the police revealed the fact that the child had been stolen from her aunt at Zarvanic, near Podhajce, in Galicia, by a gang of professional mendicants, who had put out both her eyes, broken one of her arms, and one of her legs, and inflicted painful wounds on all visible parts of her body.

She had been a veritable mine of wealth to them. On learning these facts, the visitors to the fair would have lynched all the beggars there but for the intervention of the police.

A MAN was brought before a magistrate for defamation in calling his neighbour a scavenger when the famous Derrick was present. "Pray, sir," said Derrick to the magistrate, "attend seriously to this charge, for to me it appears that there is some very dirty work going forward."

IN PREPARATION

Our First Monthly Part.

Further Particulars in our Next Issue.

DR. SMETHURST

Poisoner.

He foully killed a lady to whom he was bigamously married. He was twice tried for murder, and though sentenced to death on the first occasion, on the second was condemned to one year's imprisonment!

"Trust me, no tortures which the poets feign
Can match the fierce, the unutterable pain
He feels, who, night and day devoid of rest,
Carries his own accuser in his breast."

—GIFFORD, "Juvenal."

PART II.

WHEN Dr. Smethurst was placed at the bar, evidence bearing out the facts already stated was given at unusually great length, and we will, therefore, only add to such testimony the opinions expressed by the leading scientific authorities concerned in the case, who were only heard on the subject at the final trial.

Dr. Todd, who was at the time physician at King's College Hospital, stated that when he saw the patient he noticed a peculiar expression of countenance—an expression of terror—as if she was under the influence of someone; and that was not in accordance with the appearance of a patient suffering from an ordinary disease. The abdomen was very hard, which was an indication of the existence of extensive inflammation in the stomach, and he was at once under the impression that she was suffering from the influence of some irritant poison. By his desire, an evacuation was obtained, and he directed Dr. Julius to make sulphate of copper and opium pills, with a view to allay the irritation. He had never known any bad effect produced by this medicine, and he did not think it possible it could produce a burning sensation in the throat or the stomach. If the disease had been diarrhœa and bowel complaint, the medicines administered by Dr. Julius were the proper ones in such a case.

Dr. Taylor, Professor of Chemistry at Guy's Hospital, gave perhaps the more interesting evidence with regard to the nature of the irritant poison administered. He was furnished for analysis with two bottles. He took two drachms from one of these; then, having made a test, he discovered a metallic deposit on the copper wire, which indicated the presence of arsenic or antimony. He subsequently applied nitric acid to the deposit, and the result satisfied him that arsenic was present.

His calculation was that there must have been less than a quarter of a grain mixed with that 4 ozs. of matter than were in the second bottle. There was no trace of mercury, or antimony, or bismuth, but he discovered the presence of copper by a subsequent test. He examined the evacuation, and came to the conclusion that it was such as would pass through a person who had taken arsenic, and he immediately recommended that the antidote for arsenic—hydrate of magnesia—should be administered to the patient. He afterwards examined the contents of the other bottle, and found that it did not contain any poison or any metallic matter whatever. A portion of the viscera of a human being was brought to him by an inspector of police on the 7th of May, which the professor submitted to chemical examination, as well as a number of bottles and several boxes of pills, which were respectively numbered. These comprised, in all, twenty-eight articles, and although these were all carefully scrutinised, not a trace of arsenic was found. He discovered the presence of antimony in the lower intestines, and also in the cœcum, and upon one of the kidneys. There were also some traces of antimony in some blood that was said to have been taken from the heart of the deceased.

Dr. Odling, the Professor of Practical Chemistry at Guy's Hospital, and many others of the leading lights of the Faculty, were called by the Crown, all of them scientific men of the highest standing, who were unanimous in stating that they could not ascribe the symptoms described to any natural cause, but could only refer them to the continuous administration of some irritant poison, such as arsenic or antimony, in small doses, by which the action of the medicines prescribed was counteracted, and which were, without the slightest doubt, the cause of death.

Several prominent medical gentlemen, on the other hand, gave absolutely rebutting evidence. They were decidedly of opinion that the symptoms of the deceased were not reconcilable with a case of slow arsenical poisoning. Bismuth, as sold in shops, almost always contained arsenic. They thought that had death in this case been produced by slow arsenical or antimonial poisoning, traces of either of those particular poisons would have been found. They were of opinion that the deceased had died of acute dysentery. Two of these had given evidence on Palmer's trial,* and gave evidence in favour of the accused. They were of opinion that Cooke did not die of strychnine; and that if strychnine had been administered it could have been detected. Dr. Webb (Professor St. George's or Grosvenor School of Medicine) was of opinion that the pregnancy of the deceased was a material item in the case, and would have accounted for many of the symptoms that presented themselves.

But enough of evidence!

The prisoner was brought in Guilty, and he was duly sentenced to death. Before leaving the dock the prisoner, without exhibiting the least emotion, exclaimed in a firm voice, "I declare Dr. Julius to be my murderer. I declare I am innocent before God!"

According to the custom of England, the public, who before the trial, had universally believed in the guilt of the prisoner, no sooner saw him found guilty by the proper tribunal, than they began to discover his innocence! It is the nature of the crimes, such as that alleged in this case, to be in most instances incapable of demonstrative proof, and it appeared from the medical evidence for the defence, given in the trials of Palmer and Smethurst, that there are individuals and schools of some eminence who controvert the opinions of the received authorities. The legal profession, also, can in no way be accused of mute subservience to professional authority, and are wont to exercise their acuteness in criticisms on all cases of importance or novelty that may arise. It is, beyond question, of great advantage to society that this should be so, for the strong conflict of opinion in the one profession would not permit the dicta of the opposite sect to be taken without investigation; and the experience of the other in the law of evidence are equally adapted to prevent illogical deductions from scientific facts, and to provide a just application of the extrinsic circumstances to the medical testimony. By the two professions the case of Smethurst was taken up with extraordinary eagerness, and the daily newspapers were filled with letters on one side and the other. It was the opinion of many that in this controversy the two professions dealt too exclusively each with its own domain—that the doctors discussed too exclusively the medical facts and theories, and that the lawyers confined themselves too much to the collateral facts, without embracing the medical ones. This circumstance was of much use to the prisoner, for while it is quite possible that neither of two classes of evidence, if considered separately, may afford sufficient proof, the two combined may be irresistible. However this may be, the controversy prepared the public mind to believe that Smethurst had not been proved—legally proved—guilty of the crime of which he had been convicted, and, therefore, when the Home Secretary sent a reprieve, it was felt that the case was undergoing a deliberate revision.

It would seem that the attitude taken up by the public in their strictures against the infliction of the extreme penalty, found an echo in the Home Office, and, despite the voluminous evidence and the classical summing-up of the Judge, and the administration of the only sentence which he could impose, a sapient legislature gave apparently sealed instructions, which resulted in the convict being brought to the bar once more.

It would be instructive to be enabled to fathom the impulses which governed the judicial mind at the final stage of the drama. Probably the Judge, in the discretionary powers vested in him, determined to mark his sense of the ridiculous by pointing the extreme, and he awarded the lucky poisoner one year's hard labour.

What for? MURDER?

*A full account of the murder by Palmer of a man named Cook will appear in an early issue.—EDITOR, FAMOUS CRIMES.

Poisons;

THE MYSTERIOUS DRUGS which silently deal death, now popularly described for the first time . .

MERCURY.

FROM the earliest times the poisonous properties of some of the salts of mercury have been recognised. The Egyptians were acquainted with the perchloride or corrosive sublimate, as were the Greeks and the Arabians, who attributed to it miraculous powers. By the Romans it was called hydrargyrus, or "water silver," and by the alchemists it was known as mercury, after the god Mercurius, the messenger of Jupiter. The fluid metal had a great fascination for the old alchemists, who confidently hoped that it would aid them in their search for the Philosopher's Stone, which was to turn all metals into gold. This idea they obtained from the well-known phenomenon of the fusion, or amalgamation which takes place when pure mercury comes in contact with pure gold.

But it is not with mercury as an archæologic object that we have to do. Towards the end of the twelfth dynasty corrosive sublimate was used by the Egyptian monarchs as a poison, and traces of the drug have been found in the bodies of mummies. These are probably the earliest examples of the poisonous action of corrosive sublimate.

In our own country we do not find anything like an important case of poisoning with this dangerous substance till the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, in the reign of King James I. The unfortunate knight was polished off with corrosive sublimate after a succession of other poisons, including crushed spiders, had been tried on him without effect.

The metal mercury is found in its pure state in nature, as well as in combination with silver and gold. In the Pyrenees and the Ural Mountains there are wells of mercury which has only to be collected in wash-leather bags and despatched to the nearest market, but by far the most general source of the supply of the useful metal is from the mineral cinnabar, or sulphide of mercury, which is found in enormous quantities at Almaden, in Spain, and at Idria, in Illyria. China, Peru, Mexico, Borneo, and California also possess cinnabar mines.

The metal is extracted from the cinnabar by the very simple process of heating the ore in closed vessels, or closed furnaces, and passing the vapour into receivers, where the pure metal condenses without the least difficulty, and is collected in bottles for the market. From this metal corrosive sublimate is made, either by treating the metal with the gas chlorine, or by heating together common salt and the sulphate of mercury. The mercuric chloride sublimes, that is, passes off in vapour, and then cools as a solid, and sodium sulphate remains behind in the vessel. The deadly drug is usually seen as a white powder or as heavy crystalline masses. It is very readily dissolved by water.

Corrosive sublimate has a very acrid, metallic taste, and it is difficult to imagine how a poisonous dose could be swallowed without the victim being instantly aware of it. The symptoms which follow its administration come on in a few minutes. There is the coppery taste in the mouth, which rapidly descends to the stomach, and then turns into a feeling of burning. During the act of swallowing there is a painful constriction in the throat, which almost suffocates the patient, then a violent pain is felt in the abdomen, which is increased by the slightest pressure. Nausea and frequent vomiting of white strings of mucus follow, together with profuse purging, often of bloody matter. The countenance is sometimes swollen and flushed, and at other times pale and anxious. The pulse is small, frequent, and irregular, and at times almost imperceptible during the paroxysms of pain. The corrosive sublimate is a violent irritant, and the patient's mouth looks as if it had been treated with caustic, the tongue being shrivelled and the lips swollen and white. Death is usually preceded by convulsions and coma.

Only those who have seen a post-mortem examination on the body of a person who has succumbed to sublimate poisoning can have any idea of the ravages which this powerful irritant commits. Almost the whole of the lining membrane of the stomach and intestines is destroyed, forming, in many cases, one vast sore; yet, strange to say, there have only been two cases where the wall of the stomach has been perforated by the action of the poison.

In acute cases death usually supervenes in from one to five days, but may take place sooner or later than this. In the record case for shortness of time, the man lived for half an hour only after taking the poison, while cases where the victim has lived in agony for twelve and fourteen days are also on the black book of this poison.

The smallest dose that has destroyed life is two and a half grains, and it is probable that anything over three grains would kill an adult.

The antidotes to be administered immediately in a case of poisoning by means of corrosive sublimate are, fortunately, those which are to be found in every house. The first thing to do is to give the whites of several eggs, raw, to drink; and then administer eggs and milk freely. Everything possible should be done to get the poison out of the stomach, and a medical man would promptly use the stomach pump. Stimulants may then be given, and the first grave danger thus averted, but there is always the danger of the patient succumbing later to constriction of the œsophagus caused by the irritant or to ulcers in the stomach set up by the poison.

There are several other methods of poisoning by this drug, for application of it to a raw surface, or even to the skin, may cause it to be absorbed into the system and bring about death. From the external application of corrosive sublimate only one criminal trial has been brought about.

A quack doctor practising in the villages round Hampshire was waited on by a man who had a large ulcer on his face. The ulcer was really due to a malignant tumour, but quack doctor Crook promised to cure him, telling him that he would suffer acute pain for a few days and then be well for the rest of his life. The man consented, and Crook applied a quantity of corrosive sublimate to the wound. He was quite right as to the first part of his statement, for the man suffered agonies for three days, and then died with all the symptoms of mercurial poisoning. At the post-mortem examination the inside of the stomach was found inflamed, just as if the man had swallowed the drug, and distinct traces of corrosive sublimate were found in the tumour. This led to "Dr." Crook making his appearance in the dock at the Winchester Lent Assizes of 1859 on a charge of manslaughter. The evidence was conclusive, and the doctor was sent to prison for a long term, to give him an opportunity to repent of his presumption in treating cases without knowledge.

Poisoning may also occur through the unbroken skin, for in 1864 two brothers died from the effects of applying corrosive sublimate to the legs. They lingered for eleven days and five days respectively, and post-mortem appearances were similar to those in cases where the drug had been swallowed. It is also reported that corrosive sublimate was used by the secret poisoners to prepare their gloves, socks, and other poisoned garments which they presented to their victims.

There is another preparation of mercury which has been used for criminal purposes, and which, unfortunately, is not difficult to obtain, even by children. That is ammoniated mercury, or white precipitate. This is a white powder which does not dissolve in water. It is frequently used by the poor as an application for ringworm and other diseases brought about by uncleanliness. Curiously enough, most of the attempts to poison with this substance have been made by children. In 1873 a boy of twelve was convicted of an attempt to murder his master with this substance, which he administered in medicine. The prosecutor noticed the difference in the taste, and at once took a strong emetic, which saved his life. Analysis showed that the bottle of medicine contained a quantity of white precipitate. Four years previously a girl was convicted at Manchester of attempting to poison her father with the same salt, which she gave to him in milk. Again the taste showed that all was not right, and a doctor arrived in time to save the man.

If not detected in time, white precipitate is almost as virulent a poison as corrosive sublimate, but being insoluble in water or alcohol, it does not enter the system so rapidly, and thus gives time for prompt action. The symptoms of poisoning with white precipitate are the same as those of corrosive sublimate poisoning, with the exception that the skin of the mouth and throat is not affected. Emetics and white of egg are the antidotes. Mercury has been found in the bones of a person who was poisoned with white precipitate after the body has been in the grave for eight years. The mercury was in the metallic form, lodged in the interstices of the bones.

There remains yet another salt of mercury which has been used with murderous intent, and which, unfortunately, fulfilled its purpose only too well, and gave rise to one of the most remarkable trials on record—cyanide of mercury. The drug is rare, and is not used in medicine, though in some of

the arts it has its use. It is made by treating metallic mercury with a stream of cyanogen, or by the action of silver cyanide on a weaker salt of mercury. The poisonous effect of the drug would be cyanide poisoning, and not mercury poisoning, but on account of the peculiarity of the case it must be included here.

In November, 1898, a prominent member of the Knickerbocker Athletic Club, in New York, by name Henry C. Barnett, received an anonymous gift of a bottle of Kutnow's powder. A few days later he was attacked with a touch of diphtheria, but a very light one. He left his bed rather sooner than he should, and fell down dead from what appeared to be heart failure. There is no doubt that he took a dose out of the bottle of Kutnow's powder before he died. The bottle of powder was examined, when it was found that the powder had been mixed with cyanide of mercury.

Shortly before Christmas in the same year, Mr. Cornish, the athletic director of the Knickerbocker Club, received an anonymous present of a bottle of bromo seltzer. A week later he took both presents to the house of his aunt, Mrs. Adams, and gave them to his cousin, Mrs. Rogers. Next day Mrs. Adams had a headache, and Mrs. Rogers suggested some bromo seltzer, which Mr. Cornish, who was in the house, mixed for her and gave to her. Mrs. Adams immediately exclaimed, "How bitter it is!" In a few minutes she collapsed, and died shortly after.

The post-mortem showed that the lady had died from cyanide poisoning, and an analysis of the bromo seltzer proved that it had been mixed with cyanide of mercury. The police suspected a Mr. R. B. Molineux, who was a member of the Knickerbocker Club.

Twice Molineux was arrested on suspicion, and twice liberated, but he was arrested a third time and brought to trial at the Central Criminal Court of New York, on November 14th, 1899. The trial lasted for three months, and in the end he was found guilty of murder. Shortly after his condemnation, an application was made for a new trial, and it was granted, at which he was acquitted on a technical point. In another number we shall give a detailed account of the cunning manner in which the crime was brought home to this clever, but heartless, man.

In the whole history of poisoning there have only been four fatal cases of death from the use of cyanide of mercury, namely, three suicides and the murder of Mrs. Adams, for the death of Mr. Barnett was not directly due to the poison.

Wine-loving Burglar.

THE career of John Gillespie, who lately died at the age of eighty in the Carlisle Workhouse, constitutes almost a record in criminal romance.

Until about twenty-two years ago he was a constant menace to the law, and the terror of his gaolers.

Known as "the king of lock-pickers," he brought burglary up to a fine art. He laughed at locksmiths; by his ingenuity he was frequently circumventing their devices to make their inventions burglar-proof.

Probably the most remarkable episode in his remarkable life was when, in 1844, it came very near dissolution, inasmuch as Gillespie was, at the Cumberland Assizes, condemned to death for housebreaking at Wigton.

But with practically the rope round his neck his resource never deserted him. Placing some soap in his mouth, he made such a convincing show of illness, suggested by the foam so produced, that he was reported to be in a dying condition. The death sentence was commuted to one of imprisonment for life, and then Gillespie, so runs the official record, was "pardoned in a dying condition."

To prevent death taking place in gaol, Gillespie's removal to the infirmary was ordered. Still foaming at the mouth, he was placed on a stretcher, but as two warders carried him out of the prison "the dying man" sprang to his feet and completely eluded his amazed gaolers.

But such a narrow escape from death placed no damper upon this active burglar, who was in prison time after time in the North of England and parts of Scotland. He once entertained Aberdeen to a very daring and clever escape from prison, and even when in captivity his mania for picking locks could not be subdued.

One of his quaint idiosyncrasies is said to have been periodical visits to the governor's wine cellar, for before his skill "locks, bolts, and bars" would "fly asunder." Not only so, but it is related that he would release some of his fellow-prisoners and invite them to share in the carouse, the effects of which would be quite apparent to the mystified warders soon afterwards.

Just before he was sixty years of age he fell under good influences, and completely reformed, having contributed to life a specimen of those realities that are "stranger than fiction."

FEEDING ON CORPSES

INSTANCES of extraordinary and depraved appetites may be found in the writings both of ancient and modern authors; and there are also many cases on record, in which it will be seen that this horrible disease has reached to a most astonishing height; but not one of them can parallel the following disgusting narrative. We have some recollection of reading an account of a brutal Englishman, whose depraved and unnatural appetite could only be appeased by human flesh; but even this case was not attended with such diabolical circumstances of depravity and horror as will be found on perusal of the following:

The police of Paris, early in the last century, apprehended and lodged in the Bicetre, a man named Antoine Langulet, who, they were given to understand, had been for a long time past in the habit of satisfying an unnatural appetite with food of the most repulsive and disgusting description. It appeared that animal substances in the highest state of putrefaction, and even the human body itself, were regarded by this miserable wretch as very delicate morceaux. He usually staid within doors the whole of the day till sunset, when he would walk forth, and parade up and down the dirtiest lanes and alleys of Paris; and noting where a piece of stinking carrion lay floating in the kennel, he would return at midnight, and, seizing it, convey it to his lodgings, and feast on it for the next day's meal. In this manner he kept up his wretched existence for years, until, by a refinement in his appetite, he at length found his way to the burial grounds; and, after many attempts (with some rude instrument his ingenuity had formed for the purpose), he at length succeeded in pulling out of the graves several of the bodies recently interred. His appetite was so ravenous that he would feast upon them on the spot, and, covering the remains with mould, would return for several successive evenings to finish the repast, as he states he was at first fearful of being seen carrying anything from such a place as a cemetery. What is still more extraordinary, he would feast himself upon the intestines in preference to any other part of the body; and when he had thus regaled himself, he would fill his pockets with as much as they would conveniently hold of this horrible material for a future meal.

At length he found this plan inconvenient, as it took up too much time; he therefore determined on running the risk of discovery, and convey his darling article of food to his lodging, which was in a miserable hay-loft. This he attempted, and actually conveyed, at two several times, the whole of the body of a young female which had been entombed a week before. Here he was discovered regaling on this truly horrible repast; and the terrific appearance which the whole scene presented struck the beholders with unspeakable horror.

When interrogated on the subject of this dreadful depravity, he said that from a child he had always been fond of what other people denominated loathsome food, and then expressed his surprise and wonder that any one could attach the least blame to him for a taste to him so natural. Nor did he appear to consider that he had committed any crime in endeavouring to satisfy that appetite in the way he had done.

His answers to whatever questions were put to him were precise and rational, although there appeared at times a little incoherence in his manner. He acknowledged that he sometimes felt the greatest inclination to devour children of a tender age, but that he never could summon sufficient courage to kill them. He has ever since been incarcerated in the prison of the Bicetre, for fear of the consequences which might result from his horrible propensities.

Even in recent years America was stirred by the case of a man named Packer, who was a veritable cannibal. His awful history we propose to give in a later number, as a proof that insanity frequently causes mankind to develop the most unnatural tastes.

The Resurrectionists.

These Scoundrels stole Corpses from the Graves and sold them for a Paltry Sum to the Medical Schools.

"Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones."
—Shakespeare's Epitaph.

IN these days of well-equipped medical schools, fitted with all that is requisite for the proper training of those who desire to make the healing art their life's work, one can hardly realise the straits to which the surgeons, even as late as 1838, were put to provide material for the adequate instruction of those who in later years were to succeed them in the practice of medicine. Hospitals were veritable lazarrettos, medicine was merely empirical, and the pharmacopœia included such drugs as moss from a dead man's skull, powdered bones, ashes of the bones of still-born children, crushed snails, and such like disgusting compounds, while the very active remedies were most impure, and consisted chiefly in crude preparations of the herbs of the field. Prescribing was merely a matter of classified guesswork. If a certain mixture, the active principles of the chief components being unknown, had once cured a headache, then it was presumed that it would do the same in other cases, and so forth.

But lamentable as was the knowledge of medicine, the ignorance of the principles of surgery was even more deplorable. This was due to the great difficulty which the teachers had in obtaining bodies for dissection, and without dissection surgery is really impossible. Thus it came about that various schemes were proposed for the regular supply of the very necessary corpses to the anatomists of the period.

The first actual mention of the purloining of bodies for the dissection room is to be found in one of the Fountainhall MSS., and is dated February 6, 1678. It records that four gipsies, who had been hanged for pillaging, had been thrown into a pit, and that the following morning one of the corpses was missing, it being surmised that some enterprising "chirurgeon or his servant had taken it to make an anatonical dissection on." The same paper regrets that the magistrates of Edinburgh should not be compelled to give the medical faculty one corpse per year for them to perform the necessary anatomical demonstrations upon, and quotes that such is the practice in Paris and Leyden, the two greatest medical schools at that time. Think of it. An entire medical university obliged to satisfy itself with one corpse a year! No wonder that progress in medical science was slow in those days.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century the great Dr. Monteith, who preceded Munro, and has been joined with him as the founders of modern anatomical research, obtained from the magistracy of Edinburgh permission to have several bodies delivered to them every year for the purpose of assisting the students in their acquisition of sound knowledge. After much difficulty the permission was granted, but it was hedged about by so many and such absurd restrictions that it was almost valueless.

But the advance of science can never be controlled. If the doctors could not get bodies by fair means, they would obtain them by foul. Thus came about the organisations which made their money by rifling churchyards.

At first the business of obtaining corpses from the tombs in which they had been interred was taken up by the more enthusiastic of the medical students. They elaborated a wonderful system of espionage, by means of which they were able to learn of any death which had taken place in the district in which they were situated, and also of any particular features in the deceased's illness. When the grave had been filled in, the students would consort together and devise a scheme by which the body of the defunct might be brought into the anatomy rooms.

Shortly after dark a small party of medicos would set out in a trap, equipped with spades and shovels, and an empty sack, in search of the graveyard where the desirable body had been buried. Arrived there, the band was divided into watchers and workers. The former prevented interruption while the latter were at work digging out the grave again. Soon the coffin was reached, and, where possible, raised to the surface. The lid was ruthlessly torn off, and the remains of the poor occupant dragged out and hustled into the sack. Back went the empty coffin and the fragments of boarding into the sepulchre, and the hole was rapidly filled in, so that no too evident trace might be left of the depredation. Then the entire party returned to the town.

Many were the adventures that the students had when gaining possession of their ghastly booty, for it was not long before the populace began to get knowledge that their dead were not allowed to rest in peace. Here is one of the little escapades of the future grave and reverend doctors:

News was brought to the students of Edinburgh that a middle-aged man had died of fever at Leven, in Fifeshire. There was some obscurity in his case, so they determined to fetch him to their rooms for examination. Two set out on the task, and before long had the worthy man, Henderson by name, above ground, and his body was carefully packed in a sack. Then the couple started off home again carrying their burden. Before long one of the young men was taken ill, and had to seek refuge at a neighbouring inn, and as his companion was incapable of carrying the "stiff" by himself, he entered with him. The two were shown into a bedroom having one of the old-fashioned box-beds built into the wall. Drinks were ordered, and they sat down to refresh themselves, hoping that the temporary indisposition of the one would soon pass off. While they were regaling themselves the police of the district called at the public-house and told the landlady that there were two thieves in the neighbourhood who had just broken into an adjoining house, and asked permission to search the premises. The students were furtively examining their "subject" when they heard the voices of the officers, and in their fright hastily bundled the body into the cupboard-bed, closing the door. Then they jumped through the window and fled into the darkness. The constables heard them and gave chase, but could not catch them.

Late that night the good woman of the inn went to bed, and on opening the bed was horrified to find that it contained her husband, the late Mr. Henderson, who had died but a few days before.

On another occasion the students, amongst whom was Liston, who lived to become the father of modern surgery, raised a body from a churchyard and took it away in a sack. Wishing to call at an inn, they hid the booty in a ditch, and went into the hostelry to get refreshment. While there they heard a great noise, but were informed by the maid that it was only her sailor brother, who had come in drunk. They were beginning to feel relieved, when to their horror the drunken mariner staggered into the inn parlour bearing a sack which they recognised too well. Before they could remonstrate, he exclaimed that he had found some thieves' booty and wanted to see what was the value of it. Thereupon he opened the bag, and when he saw that a human corpse was the extent of the valuables which he had been carrying, he shrieked and fled, followed by his sister. In great alarm Liston and his fellows picked up the bag and made the best of their way to the place where a conveyance was waiting for them. It later transpired that they had placed the body almost on the top of the sailor, who was lying in a drunken stupor in the ditch.

In the dissection rooms it was necessary that there should be a certain amount of common assistants, porters, and so forth, and they rapidly got to know of the value of the bodies which were brought in. Naturally they were not slow to give the information to their friends who were not employed in the anatomy schools. These, desirous of profiting by what appeared to be a very lucrative profession, took to body-snatching as a regular trade. In Scotland they were known as "Resurrectionists," and scarcely a churchyard within twenty miles of the principal towns was free from their depredations. They were very cunning, and their system of obtaining information as to what bodies would be likely to fetch a decent price in the market was never excelled even by the more highly-trained students, aided, no doubt, by their professors.

These "Resurrectionists" worked in gangs, and divided profits. We give an illustration of them at work. To raise

a body, drag it from the coffin, and replace the empty shell and the earth was a matter of a very short time with these gentlemen. The spoil was then taken, either in a cart or carried, to the nearest school of medicine, and sold there for about a couple of pounds. Body-snatching flourished chiefly in Scotland, where even to this day may be seen iron cages erected over the graves of the more wealthy to baffle the attacks of the rifflers.

In spite of the repulsion which the general public displayed towards the "Resurrectionists," they were quite a recognised class, and certain individuals were regarded as the chiefs of the trade. Notable among these was Merrylees, or "Merry Andrew," as he was generally called, and as a lieutenant he had an equally villainous colleague known as "The Spune." These two were later joined by "Moudewart," whose real name was Mowatt. This infamous trio used to watch the houses of the dying and attempt to bribe the nurses to sell them the body as soon as life was extinct, substituting bricks for the proper contents of the coffin. In their impatience, they occasionally entered the sick-room before the patient had died, and are said to have thus frightened many a poor soul to death.

Nor did they respect even their own relations. On one occasion Merrylees lost his sister. A few days prior to the sad occurrence he had offended "The Spune" and Mowatt, and the two determined to pay him out by lifting the girl's body as soon as possible. Accordingly they went to the grave on the evening after the interment with the necessary implements, and soon had the corpse above ground. Just as they had resettled the earth, they were disturbed by a figure advancing, and hurriedly dropped their booty and made off.

The intruder was none other than Merrylees, who looked at the remains of his sister, and, remarking that his colleagues had saved him a lot of trouble, he picked it up and ran after the retreating couple.

They ran hard, hoping to reach the trap which was in readiness, but seeing how close the pursuing figure was getting, they abandoned the vehicle and ran across the fields. Chuckling to himself, "Merry Andrew" deposited his burden in the cart and drove off to the doctor's. Next morning he returned the horse and cart with many thanks.

The increasing zest given to the study of medicine by the improved facilities thus obtained caused the demand for bodies to exceed the supply, and the prices given naturally were enhanced. Then it was that certain scoundrels conceived the idea of making corpses for themselves, and not waiting for the natural death of the victims.

Notorious among these inhuman monsters were Burke and his infamous associates, Hare and Helen McDougal, whose awful record we shall give in another number. This trio killed over forty people for the purpose of selling their remains. Burke died on the scaffold. Hare turned king's evidence, and saved his neck, though he was an outcast for the rest of his days, while McDougal was liberated, having been adjudged as "Not Proven," but she nearly lost her life at the hands of the infuriated populace.

HOW THE BODY-SNATCHERS WORKED.

Helen Torrence and Jean Waldie also took to killing children and selling their bodies and both of them died a felon's death.

Scotland was not the only part of the country cursed by these odious practices, though inasmuch as the principal medical schools were then in the North, the crimes of body stealing and "burking" were more common there than in England.

In 1777 two men, named Holmes and Williams, were convicted of body-snatching and sentenced to be whipped from Holborn to St. Giles's on two occasions. Burke and Hare found imitators in Bishop and Williams, who murdered a boy near Hatton Garden, and offered his body for sale to Guy's Hospital. These two ruffians were hanged outside the Old Bailey on December 5, 1831, over thirty thousand people assembling to hoot them in their dying moments.

The passing of the Anatomy Act of 1832, which made proper provision for the supplying of medical schools with fitting subjects for dissection, gave the death blow to "burking" and body stealing, and gradually they died out, but relics of the fear which people had of their friends being stolen and sold to the doctors may still be found in the watch by the dead body till interment, and in the very massive tombstones which are common in most parts of the country.

A LAWSUIT arose in a certain university upon the point whether the doctors in law or the doctors in medicine should take precedence. The judge asked the council whether it was usual for the thief to walk first at an execution. Being answered that the thief always walked first, "Then," said the judge, "let the doctors in law have the precedence, and let the doctors in medicine be next in rank."

THE MYSTERY OF

Louise Masset

"Say, what remains when hope is fled!"
She answered: 'endless weeping.'"
ROGERS, "The Boy of Egremond."

A pitiful story of a young mother's crime. She immolated the love for her child for the sake of the fleeting fancy of a fickle Frenchman.

PART I.

DURING the last two years of the departed century, a young lady named Louise Masset lived with her sister and brother-in-law at 29, Bethune Road, Stoke Newington.

By profession a governess, Miss Masset, proficient linguist that she was, earned a salary that enabled her to live in good style, to dress beautifully, and to support in comparative affluence her little love-begotten child.

A child? An illegitimate child?

Yes, this girl, so graceful in her Parisian draperies, this girl of the rose-red, pouting lips, of the lily-white complexion, of the dark, mysterious eyes, of the shy, half frightened manners, this fair, smiling creature had had her history, had loved once and had suffered!

How deep and unfathomable are the depths of human dissimulation! Here we have this fragrant, laughter-loving daughter of the spring, nursing deep down in her heart an old hidden sorrow—a sorrow of which the world knew nothing, of which, at that time, she intended the world should never know.

But it was willed otherwise; it was fated that our gay-hearted Louise should be the central figure of a terrible, a soul-appalling tragedy.

As may easily be imagined when Miss Masset first came to reside in Stoke Newington, she created a local furore. The gentlemen of that district stared open-eyed and wonder-struck at the vision of womanly splendour that was living in their midst. The small boys, who with their parents occupied the house opposite to 29, Bethune Road, flattened their noses daily against the window as they stared at the real live princess who had jumped straight out of the story book and was so condescending as to sleep and walk—they could never imagine such a fairy-like person eating—in the same street as themselves. Yet, although the entire male population of Stoke Newington, from the small boys in the opposite house to the gentlemen in the city, who went lunchless to invest their earnings in irresistible neckties, and who had a most unaccountable habit of promenading Bethune Road in the evenings and all day on Sunday, the little governess kept very much to herself. She had her own troubles and her own matters of business, and she cared not a snap of her pretty fingers for the city gentlemen, with their startling neckties and elaborate walking sticks. To her youthful admirers opposite she was more indulgent, sometimes treating them to a real, unmistakable smile, and the enamoured youths on these occasions invariably ate no supper, but held dark and secret councils as to the best way to become pirates, return home millionaires, and fall at the feet of the miraculous princess with the golden smile.

But the princess had more to do than to think of the possible embarrassments that might arise from the love of half a dozen pirate millionaires. Every Wednesday afternoon she journeyed to Tottenham, there to fall into a mother's raptures over the growing promise of her darling child. Every Wednesday afternoon she carried to her little son Manfred offerings of maternal devotion, in the shape of bonbons, sweets, toys, and cakes. Every Wednesday she took the boy with her for a few hours to some park, and the two played together, laughed and cried together, with all the deep and beautifying affection of child and mother.

These short, flitting hours were to Louise Masset brief moments spent in paradise; she forgot for a little while the world and its myriad afflictions in the embraces of the babyish arms, in the kisses of the tiny, rose-bud lips.

Remember all this. In the light of after events remember this—remember that there was a time when her child was to Louise Masset the joy of life.

How many mothers have turned from the offspring of their illicit passions in hate and loathing, have banished the infant from their sight, and have striven in all manner of ways to drown the remembrance of its existence.

Not so Louise. She saw that Manfred was maintained in comfort, that his many wants were all attended to, and every moment that she could snatch from the hard struggle of life was spent in the loving society of her adored child.

Remember all this. If not for the sake of justice, for the sake of pity, remember it all.

Time sped on his lightning wings, and Manfred was now two-and-a-half years old.

A young Frenchman named Eudore Lucas came to live in the house adjoining that of Mrs. Cadisch, the married

sister of Louise, with whom she resided. He was good-looking, and with all the lively manners and affable graces that are usually associated with his race. One summer's evening he was in the back garden, when, looking over the wall, he saw Miss Masset gathering flowers with Mrs. Cadisch.

"Don't you remember me?" he called out to the two women.

"No, I can't say that I do," answered the younger sister.

Lucas recalled to her mind a day and a party at which they had formerly met. A renewal of friendship took place, and the end of it was that the young man was invited to spend the evening at the Cadisches'.

Louise felt an instinctive liking for the lonely young Frenchman. She was of French extraction herself, and had all the impulsive sympathies and ardent feelings of the Gallic people.

The friendship between the two rapidly ripened, and was approved of by Miss Masset's relations. No thought of love or marriage came into consideration. Lucas was a pleasant enough fellow, argued the Cadisches, and if Louise enjoyed his society, well, where was the harm?

It is safe now, however, to surmise that an attachment

"What, in heaven's name, is the matter?"

stronger than friendship grew up between the two. We do not say that at the time of which we write there was a feeling of love in the hearts of the young people, but Love, like all the rest of the gods, has his heralds and forerunners; and one of these, we think, was sounding the trumpet, signalling Love's approach to Louise and Eudore Lucas.

Eudore was going to Brighton to spend a week-end with a male and girl friends. Would Miss Masset deign to accompany them?

Everything would be strictly platonic, but still the proprieties must be observed, so Louise, who could not find it in her heart to say "No," went down to Brighton with the three friends, but kept the visit from the knowledge of the Cadisches, and her other sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Simes.

The four foolish young people went away with light hearts and buoyant spirits. Little did they dream of the awful tragedy that was to arise from their seemingly innocent escapade!

It was during the three days' stay at Brighton that the seeds of a deeper and profounder attachment than friendship was sown in the breasts of Miss Masset and Eudore, the dreadful fruits of which will soon be made clear. Away from the restraint of London, the two enjoyed themselves to their hearts' desire; the waves sang to them, the summer winds whispered of love to them, and everything breathed of the magic of youth and beauty.

Gallic blood ran hotly in the veins of the unhappy pair, and prudence, pale and discomfited, was thrown to oblivion.

When they returned to London, Eudore confessed his love to Louise; she hesitated, remonstrated in a feminine fashion, and finally reciprocated his advances.

They walked out together now in the evenings, and every afternoon young Lucas met his sweetheart at Loudoun Road railway station—she having to journey daily to that neighbourhood to give some children in Hampstead lessons in French and English—and from there saw her home.

Their talk was now always of love and their mutual happiness.

Still, Louise did not forget or neglect her child, and every Wednesday saw her, as before, at Tottenham, solicitous of his smallest wants, passionate as ever in her motherly affection.

One night, when the lovers were out walking, Louise suddenly stopped Eudore in his amorous prattle. She had been unsually silent this evening, and constrained in her manner.

"I have something to tell you—something important—something that must be told," said she, in halting tones.

"What is it, my love?"

"Eudore, you love me—at least, you say you do. I cannot allow you to continue thus without first telling you—telling you the secret of my life."

"Well, my love?"

"I care not if it kills your love; in honesty you must be told. I have a child—a child alive—a child that I worship, I adore."

The confession came to the young man in the nature of an awakening. He had graduated in the tainted atmosphere of large cities, in society that was essentially sophisticated and material in its views, so that he cannot in any way be accounted an innocent dreamer or a visionary idealist.

He was, indeed, neither of these, but a man well-versed in the world and its ways, and one disposed to regard virtue as the private property of the romancer and the poet. But, like most men, Eudore Lucas was a profound egoist. He expected the girl of his heart to be a model of immaculate propriety unto all except himself, and he was surprised to find that Louise had been in the past as frail as many of her sisters; had loved once before his own god-like presence had shone upon her adoring vision, and had been the victim of her own unhappy passion. But now she was repentant; she confessed her sin to her lover; she did not try to excuse her fault, to mitigate the gravity of her offence. Simply and unflinchingly she had recounted the one sinful action of her past life, and she had pleaded for no forgiveness.

The nobility of her conduct, however, pleaded eloquently for her; the little, strangled sobs that shook her in her bosom and died in her throat, pleaded, too, and her eyes, so sorrowful, so wistful, so beautiful, pleaded also.

The young man felt a great desire rise up within him—he was ever the slave of a momentary impulse—to hold her within his arms, to breathe words of loving forgiveness into her ear, and to kiss away her tears.

Eudore was silent for a moment; then, with a reassuring gesture, he took the trembling girl's hands in his own.

"I am glad you have told me this," he said. "It makes no difference. Indeed, I love you more for it; you have been so honest and straightforward with me."

He clasped Louise, sobbing—half in sorrow, half in gladness—to his heart, and if such a thing were possible, their love was greater than before. We have said "their love," but the phase is open to a certain revision. Certainly Miss Masset loved the man, but his feelings towards her are harder to define. Weighing subsequent evidence, it is safe to assume that he was a warm-blooded young fellow, with little stability of character; in fact, that he felt a great deal of passion for the girl, but no love, and that the finer and more ardent qualities of her heart—and such qualities she undoubtedly at one time possessed, despite the horrible incident that looms now large in the near future—were squandered on an unworthy being. The lovers—for lovers we must call them—continued in their affectionate intimacy.

And now comes that part of this tragic drama that we have seen fit to call, "The Mystery of Louise Masset."

Can a woman, who all her life has been trusting, loving, and sweet-mannered, be transformed in an hour by influences unseen and unaccountable into a fiend of malignant enterprise?

We shall see.

Can a girl, light-hearted it is true, but who it had been proved owned some of the noblest traits in the human character, be translated into a creature of hideous crime?

We shall see.

Angels, we are told, have fallen and have become demons in hell. Women, mild-mannered and good, it would seem by some turn of a fiend's wand, may become their very proficient understudies.

On October 16, Louise wrote to Miss Gentle—the lady, it will be remembered, with whom little Manfred Masset lived—and told her that the child's father, a resident in France, was now wishful to take his boy. She asked Miss Gentle to be prepared for the parting which must necessarily ensue, on the communication she had received from Manfred's father.

The Gentles were greatly upset at this letter; they had to-day she spoke of him calmly and without emotion, like one who performs an irksome duty without flinching from the task. It was arranged between the two women that Manfred was to be removed on the following Friday, the 27th, and that Miss Gentle should bring him to Miss Masset at Stamford Hill, where the omnibuses start for London Bridge.

All took place as arranged.

On Friday morning Louise, sweet-faced and charming as ever, kissed her sister good-bye, and went out in a travelling ulster, and carrying with her a Gladstone bag. At one o'clock she met Miss Gentle and little Manfred at the place appointed.

Manfred cried a little at being parted from his old nurse, for, child though he was, he seemed to understand that he was saying farewell to Miss Gentle for ever.

On the Saturday evening Mr. and Mrs. Cadisch, feeling

THEY HAD COME TO ARREST HER FOR THE MURDER OF HER CHILD.

come to regard the child as their own, and the thought of parting from him was to them indescribably painful.

On October 18, Louise mentioned to her sister, Mrs. Cadisch, the fact that she would shortly be taking her child to its father, who was anxious to support it himself.

"I shall go over to France next week with Manfred," she said.

Her sister did not say much on the subject. She thought it would be an excellent thing for Louise's child to be taken by its father, as she had always understood he was a person in an affluent position.

On October 25, Miss Masset journeyed to Tottenham, and interviewed Miss Gentle on the subject of Manfred's departure for France. Miss Gentle wept at the thought of parting with her beloved charge, and Louise herself was notably affected at the sight of her old friend's grief.

She soothed her as best she could, and showed how wrong it would be to the child to imperil his future success in life by making an enemy of his father.

Miss Masset had hardly ever alluded to the father of Manfred; it was a subject that was always distressing to her, but lonely without Louise, who was not expected back from France until the following day, sent in to Mr. Lucas to know if he would like to spend an hour with them. Mr. Lucas was, however, away at Brighton, and the Cadisches had to enjoy themselves as best they could without any friends that night.

The next evening a cab brought Louise back to them. She seemed tired, her cheeks were pale, and there were dark rings round the beautiful eyes.

She drank some tea, chatting the while about her journey to France, and then sat down and wrote a letter to Miss Gentle.

This is what she wrote: "I have just returned from my journey. Our boy would cry until he saw the ships at London Bridge, and I told him he should go on one. He was scarcely ill at all on the way over to France, and the stewardess said he was a little chatterbox. Poor me, I was terribly sick both going and returning. Manfred sends his love to all and hopes to see you soon again."

She sent her letter out to be posted and then sat down before the fire, and so she spent the long October evening.

A pretty picture! The tired-looking girl, with her rose-leaf coloured face resting on her delicate white hands, staring with those mysterious eyes of hers into the golden heart of the glowing coals.

Looking into the fire! What did she see there? Perhaps fairy pictures, castles built of smoke, and wondrous visions rising out of the flames. Ah, girl! come away. Do not look too long on the leaping flames, scarlet, amber, and purple, and the grey, up-curling smoke. What pictures can they show to you this night? What pictures can they ever show you now but the phantoms of despair?

The next day, Monday, she appeared refreshed from her journey, and went off to her lessons with her old smile and vivacity of manner. She arrived at Hampstead at her accustomed hour, and was soon busy teaching her pupils.

She did not return to Stoke Newington that night. The Cadisches waited and wondered, but still no Louise appeared.

There was very little to talk of; the breaking war and the strange find by the police at Dalston Railway Station were the two subjects of moment then, and having exhausted these, the couple went to bed.

Mr. George Simes and his wife—Louise's other sister—were startled that night about eleven o'clock by a knock at their door.

Visitors at that hour were unusual, and Mr. Simes hurried out to see who and what the business of the caller could be. When he opened the door, he saw a young lady leaning against the wall and sobbing bitterly.

For a moment he was so surprised that he did not recognise her, and then, with a start, he cried:

"Why, Louise, what's the meaning of this? Come in at once!"

The young woman crept into the house; and he noticed that she shivered like a person numbed with frost, although it was not a cold night. Louise caught hold of his arm to prevent herself from falling; her face was white as death, her hair was unkempt and bedraggled, her eyes red with weeping. She glanced furtively around, in evident fear.

Mr. Simes was quick to support her, for it seemed she was about to faint.

"Come in here, my girl," he said kindly. "What, in heaven's name, is the matter?"

"You shall hear everything."

"Shall I call your sister?"

"No, no; not that! What I have to say I will say to you alone."

She was seated now on a couch, resting her face on her hands, and swaying to and fro like a person distraught with pain or fear.

"Listen—come close to me, and listen!" She spoke in what was little more than a whisper, but what terror there was in every word! "Listen! I am being hunted for murder! I have not done it, but I may be hanged!"

She covered her fair face with her hands, and burst into passionate weeping.

Mr. Simes was for a moment struck dumb; then he exclaimed:

"My God! you do not mean to say that the child found dead in Dalston Station was yours?"

"I do; I am sure of it. I have the child's description."

"But you took Manfred to France."

"I lied. I did not. Listen to what I say. I saw that Manfred was growing, and that Miss Gentle's was a fit home for him no longer. I determined to take him away, and to entrust his care to two ladies—perfect ladies—that I had met previously, and who, I felt sure, would look after his welfare and his education, which Miss Gentle could not do. I was weak, and I had not the heart to tell Miss Gentle that I was removing Manfred to another home in England, so I said I was taking him to his father in France. I met the ladies on Friday at London Bridge Station, and there I gave them the money I had promised, and gave Manfred into their keeping. The child was fretful, and cried, and they took him into the refreshment-room to buy him a cake. When I followed them, they were gone. Oh, good God! how foolish I have been!"

"But Louise, did you not feel alarmed at their sudden disappearance?"

"Oh, no; I had their address, and I could see that they were perfect ladies. Well, I bought an evening paper today, and saw the description of the child found murdered at Dalston Station. I am sure it is my darling Manfred. They are searching for the child's mother—they are searching for me. Oh! save me from them! save me from them, I pray you!"

She fell on her knees before Mr. Simes, the hot tears streaming down her face, and her hands stretched out in agonised supplication. He raised the distraught Louise to her feet, put her on the couch, and did his best to soothe her.

"But you went yourself to France," he said.

"No, I went to Brighton, and stayed there Saturday night with my lover, Eudore Lucas. There! you have it all now!"

She spoke in bitter, despairing accents, like one forced to terrible confessions by the press of circumstances.

Mr. Simes paced the room in bewilderment. To say he was astonished is to describe his feelings inadequately. It seemed to him that the gods were toppling from their thrones, and were being abased in the dust. Louise the beautiful, Louise the good, going to Brighton with a lover! Her child murdered, and she sought after by the police for the crime. What did it all mean? Was he the victim of some hideous nightmare, the sport of some dreadful dream?

"Tell me the truth, Louise!" he cried at length; "remember whatever you have done I will be your friend!"

The wretched girl looked at him in startled amazement.

"Oh, can you think I would murder my own dear child? Can you think it? I have told you all."

She buried her face once more in her hands and wept and wept and wept, until, if such a thing were possible, it seemed that she would weep away her soul.

Her sister was called into the council, and it was finally determined that she should spend the night with them, and go early in the morning with Mr. Simes to the gentleman at whose house she was giving lessons, and take his advice upon the matter.

There was no sleep for Louise that night, only troubled visions, much weeping, and an endless weariness through the long, dark hours that passed so slowly. She ate little or no breakfast, and in the company of Mr. Simes set out in the early morning for Hampstead. The gentleman they visited there, assured as he was of Louise's innocence, was for her facing the law's emissaries, and taking a firm and open stand for justice.

The girl herself, distraught with grief as she evidently was, and oppressed with unimaginable fears, seemed incapable of entering into any reasonable or coherent discussion of the matter.

"I will do what you say—I will do what you tell me," she kept saying again and again, swaying backwards and forwards in her chair, with her face buried in her hands.

"I am inclined to think you are making a great deal out of nothing," said her employer. "Be strong and comforted in the knowledge of your innocence; justice should have no terrors for you! Remember that only the guilty need fear the law's arm!"

"Yes, yes; I will be strong in my innocence," she said, rising to her feet with a supreme effort.

"I will be strong," she continued; "I must be strong. But, oh, my child—my child!"

Again her tortured spirit found vent in a flood of tears, and the two friends, with rough, masculine kindness, once more soothed the weeping girl, and tried to quell the terror in her heart.

When Mr. Simes and Louise were returning homewards, the former noticed that they were being closely followed. When they reached his house, they were met by a detective officer in plain clothes.

He had come to arrest Louise Masset for the murder of her child.

TO BE CONCLUDED.

A LAWSUIT being referred to a gentleman, the plaintiff, who had the equity of the cause on his side, presented him with a new carriage, the defendant with a couple of horses. The arbitrator, liking the horses better than the coach, gave sentence on the defendant's side. The plaintiff called on him, and asked how it came to pass the coach went out of the right way. He answered he could not help it—the horses had drawn it so.

ONE day a tramp, while waiting for another, lay down under a tree, near which a malefactor was hanging in gibbets, and fell into a slumber. As it happened, two of the delinquent's old comrades were passing that way, and one of them, being in a frolicsome humour, called the dead man by his name, and asked if he would not come down and take a walk with them. The dozing person, thinking it was his companion that called, replied, "Yes; I am coming!" and immediately rose to join them. The thieves, conscious of their guilt, and panic-stricken, thought the dead man had really descended from the gibbet, and took to their heels with the fleetness of deerhounds, and he who followed called in vain for them to stop.

"Man is an apprentice; pain is his master; and none knows himself so long as he has not suffered."—A. DE MUSSET.

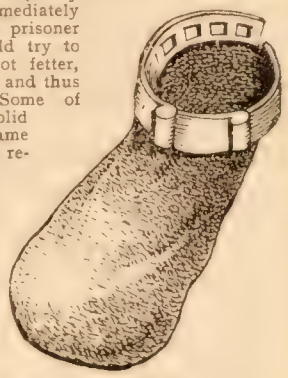
CHAPTER VI.

TORTURE by fire played a tremendous part in the legal systems of European countries in the times before the infliction of bodily pain upon prisoners and witnesses was abolished.

Heat was used in every conceivable form and applied to every part of the body, the instruments used being fiendishly ingenious, and capable of inflicting the most awful agony.

One of the most terrible of these implements was the copper boot, a supremely horrible punishment which left its victims maimed for life, if, indeed, it did not kill them in the end. It was applied to either or both feet, and water at boiling-point was poured in whilst the poor wretch, bound tightly to the iron torture-chair, so that he could not even writhe, and gagged so that he could not utter a groan, suffered the most excruciating pain. Flesh and muscle would be stripped from the bone, the sinews would shrivel up, and when the foot was removed from the boot nothing but the skeleton was left. Sometimes, instead of boiling water molten lead was poured into the boot, and this, whilst burning the foot to a cinder, would inflict untold torture upon the prisoner

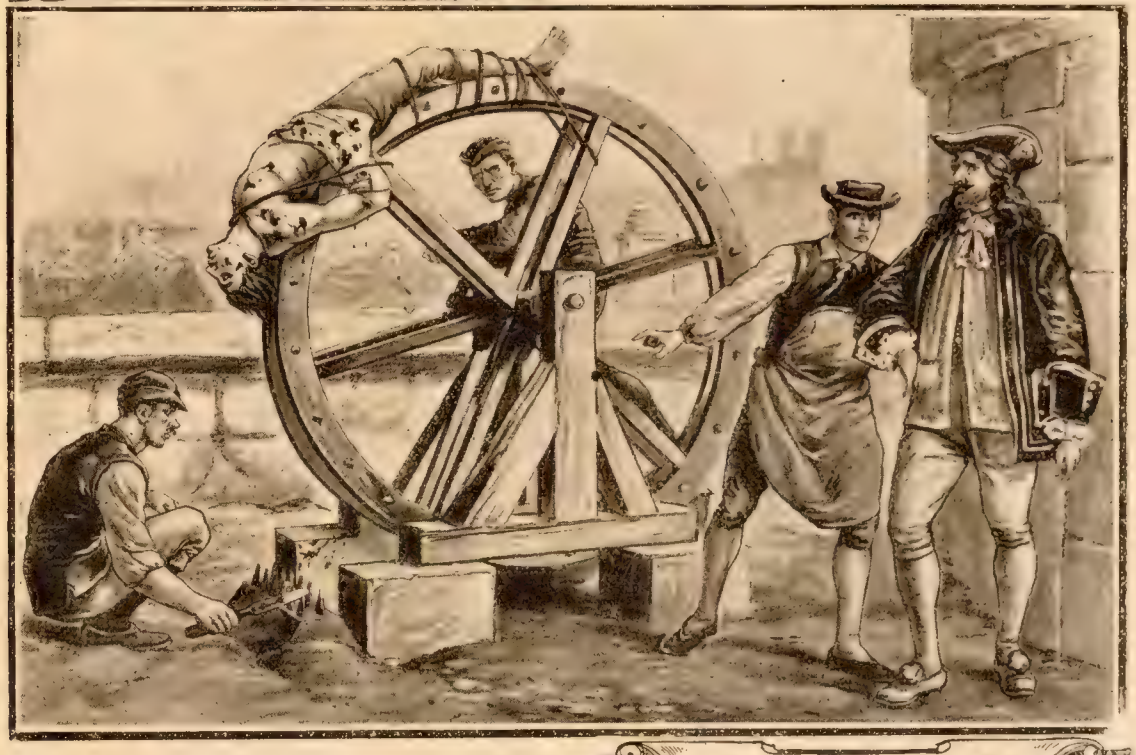
Something similar in its effect was the steel gauntlet shown in our illustration. It was made of chain mail, with a strong steel bracelet at the wrist which held it firmly in its place. The mitten part was brought to a white heat, the prisoner's hand was thrust inside, and he was left to bear the pain as best he could. The executioners had a way of their own of adding to the torture of the glove. Instead of, as was usual, strapping the victim so that he could not move a limb, they would leave the hands free. Immediately the glove was applied the prisoner with his unbound hand would try to relieve himself of the red-hot fetter, only to receive further burns, and thus increase his punishment. Some of these gloves were made of solid iron, and were used in the same way as the copper boot. The results can be readily imagined.



Steel Gauntlet.

Then there were the branding-irons, which imprinted letters and words on the palms of the hands, the foreheads, or the shoulders. The latter course was generally adopted in the case of women, and it may be remembered that that fascinating personage, "Miladi," who figures so prominently in Dumas's "Three Musketeers," was branded on the shoulder with the Fleur-de-lys of France. All the feudal castles in Germany possessed special sets of branding-irons, which stamped the initial of the castle's name. Sometimes these letters were fixed on the grips of pincers, which were made red-hot, and then applied to the quivering flesh.

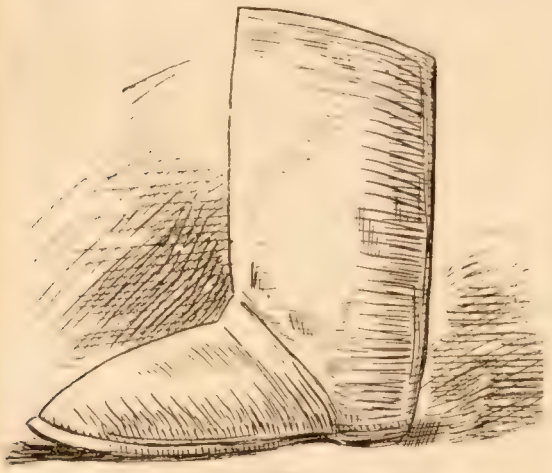
A common punishment at one time consisted of so many burns with red-hot pincers, large instruments with spoon-shaped and ribbed grips. The burns were to be inflicted at stated intervals—a certain number per hour—thus prolonging the victim's agony and giving him time to recover consciousness if the pain he was suffering caused him to swoon. It will readily be seen that torture was a fine art, and, so far as the executioners were concerned, a paying game. The smell of burning flesh is disagreeable, and the executioners were fully compensated for having to endure it. They were paid so much per burn, in addition to their standing wages, which, if it did nothing else,



ST. CATHERINE'S WHEEL.

made it certain that the prisoner would receive the full number awarded him, and so that there should be no mistake in counting them, no one burn would overlap another.

Whoever invented the lead sprinkler shown in our illustration must be accorded the palm for fiendish cruelty. As will be seen, it is a ball-shaped ladle, half of the cup being extensively perforated. The undrilled portion was filled with molten metal or boiling oil—doesn't that make you shudder?—and then the deft hand of the executioner would give the ladle a twist, a shower of blazing hot drops would fall upon the skin of the victim and sear their way into the flesh. Boiling water, pitch, or tar was also used on occasion, and probably the most severe of the lot was the last-named. A burn from tar leaves a frightfully bad wound, which takes a long time to heal, and it is not difficult to imagine the tortures of a poor wretch whose body had been plentifully sprinkled with it.



Copper Boot.

Lead Sprinkler.

The brazier shown in the picture comes from the Castle of Nuremburg, where it was used probably thousands of times to heat the irons and melt the metals which we have spoken of.

From the same place, where it is now on exhibition, comes the torture chair. Back, arms, seat and sides are covered with sharp iron spikes (there are nearly 2,000 of them), and a prisoner condemned to sit in the chair for hours at a stretch suffered extreme torture. Every inch of his body would be affected; many of the spikes would pierce his flesh, and in a short time he would be bleeding from numerous wounds, which every moment, as the poor wretch squirmed in his agony, were being added to. If by any chance the victim sat still for a few seconds a jab from a needle, handled by one of the executioners, would cause him to move sharply, and thus still further gash himself.

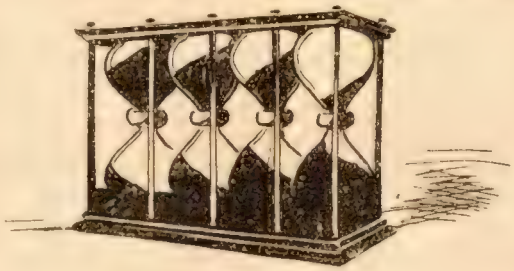
The hour glass, which was used in connection with most of the tortures which we have described, is a very ancient timepiece. It is divided into hours, three-quarters, half, and quarter, and by it the various tortures were timed. One can appreciate the feelings of the poor wretches who, as the minutes seemed hours, cursed the sands for running so slowly, and prayed for death to release them from their sufferings.

"Breaking on the wheel" is a mere figure of speech in these days, but in the bygone times it was a stern and terrible reality. The wheel, as shown in the illustration, has attached to it a large oblong piece of iron, which, in addition to increasing the weight of the instrument, added to its bone-breaking powers. The victim was laid on a ladder-like bed, and firmly strapped down. Then the wheel was rolled over and over him, and weighted with all the strength of the executioner and his assistants every bone in the victim's body was hopelessly smashed. Sometimes the culprit was bound round the tire of the wheel of a cart, the vehicle was set in motion, and slowly but surely the life was crushed out of him, his poor mangled body dropping away in pieces from the cords which held it in position.

Red Ho. Pincers.

At the Bastille, the famous French prison, another kind of wheel was in use in the olden times, and this was even more horrible than those we have described. It was mounted vertically on a shaft which raised it about a foot or 18 inches from the ground. Close to the base of the supports were set a couple or more rows of sharp iron spikes, the position of which could be altered at the will of the executioners. The victim was bound, naked and face upwards, to the wheel, which was then rapidly revolved. At first the spikes would be placed at such a distance from the wheel that only slight scratches would be inflicted upon the prisoner, but as time went on they were pushed closer and closer until they gashed the flesh in the most horrible manner and ploughed their way through the muscles down to the very bone.

All this while one of the executioners sat near the spikes,

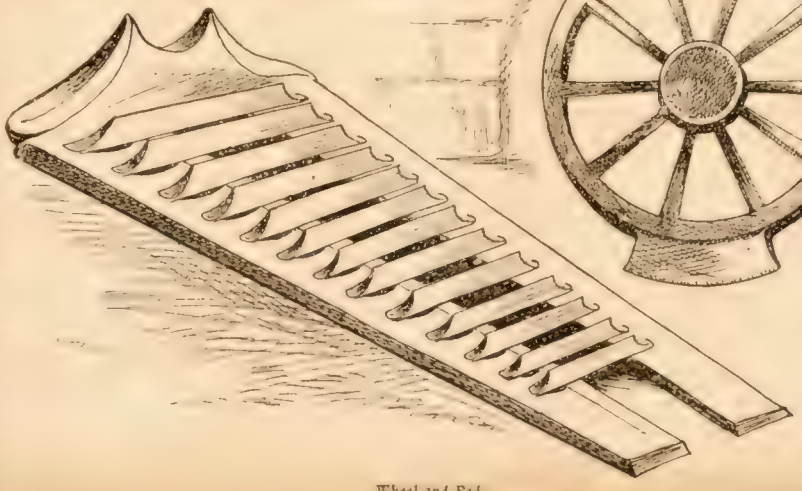


Hour Glass.

filing them from time to time to ensure that they were sharp, scraping off the shreds of flesh lest the deadly work of the wheel should be hindered.

Still another wheel, also mounted on a shaft, was furnished on the tire with a series of long, curved and exceedingly sharp iron teeth. The victim in this case was bound to a plank beneath the wheel, the teeth of which when it was turned tore his flesh to shreds and speedily disembowelled him.

Perhaps the most horrible variety of the wheel, however, was used in connection with a fire torture. Naked victims were bound with chains lengthwise on a long shaft, one end of which formed the axle of the wheel, the other resting in a socket. Underneath the victim fire was lighted, and whilst one of the executioners turned the wheel so that no part of the victim should escape the flames, a couple



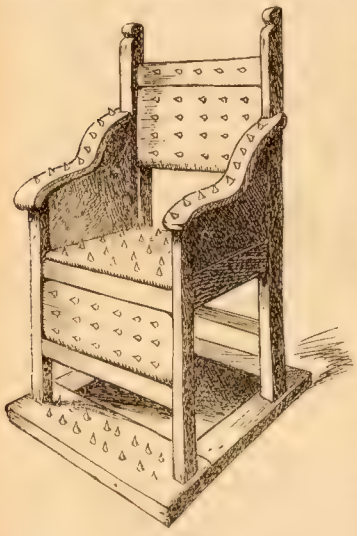
Wheel and Bed.

of others kept the fire going and occasionally "basted" the helpless wretch on the shaft with oil, which served also to feed the flames. Young and beautiful women were often killed in this fiendishly inhuman manner for no more reason than that they were suspected of being witches and of having cast their evil spells over their neighbour's cattle.

Brazier.

Horribly cruel and lingering were these dreadful punishments, which were inflicted for the most trivial as well as for serious offences.

We have not—space considerations prevent us—described a tithe of the instruments which were used in European gaols in the centuries that have passed. There were thousands of different methods for torturing those who got into the hands of the law. New ideas were experimented with from day to day, and, if successful, were speedily put into constant use, and the executioners vied with one another in producing the most cruel contrivances their distorted minds could conceive.



Iron Chair.

The fame of a new instrument spread far and wide, and the executioners endeavoured to improve upon it, and so, with the combined efforts of these barbarous men, the things which we have described came into existence. Thus barbed wire, which every farmer in the land uses nowadays to fence in his land, owes its existence to these men, who made girdles of wire covered with sharp hooks. These were fastened round the bare waist of a prisoner, and kept there night and day until the pain drove the unfortunate sufferer out of his mind, and frequently caused him to commit suicide. This, however, was looked upon either as a mere detail or a tribute to the executioner's skill.

Next week we shall describe the more humane punishments reserved for Scolds and Gossips.

THAT well-known executioner, commonly called Jack Ketch, was once summoned to the Court of Requests by the landlord of a public-house in the Old Bailey for a beer score, and, on being asked how he could pay it, the fellow scratched his head and replied that business was very bad of late, they having sent so many of his customers to Botany Bay, and, really, he could not say how he could pay it. But if his creditor would have it so, he had no objection to work it out for him or any of his family.

A HIGHWAYMAN and a chimney-sweeper were condemned to be hanged the same day at Tyburn, the first for an exploit on the highway, the latter for a more ignoble robbery. The highwayman was dressed in scarlet, and mounted the cart with alacrity; the chimney-sweeper followed him slowly. While the clergyman was praying with fervour the gay robber was attentive, and the other approached nearer to his fellow-sufferer to partake of the same benefit, but met with a repulsive look from his companion, who kept him at a distance. The sooty one presumed to come nearer, when the highwayman, with some disdain, said, "Keep farther off, can't you!" "Sir," replied the sweep, "I won't keep off, and let me tell you, I have as much right to be here as you."

THE TRAGEDY OF "IRELAND'S EYE."

"It is undoubtedly the speech of the nymph Echenias, the mistress of Daphnis, upbraiding for his incontinent passion; for he had been guilty of a breach of promise to her, and had offended her by following other women."

—FAWKES, "Theocritus.

PART II.

IN our last, we promised our readers that we should occupy ourselves in dealing a little further with the medical aspect of the case which we discussed in the first part.

Dr. Hatchell, physician and surgeon, who had made a post-mortem examination of the body, was, of course, an important authority, and he gave a minute description of the case, ranging himself in diametric opposition to the theory of epilepsy. Without following the evidence of this witness too closely, we may mention the salient features embodied in his testimony. He was of opinion that pressure was the sole cause of death, simply drowning would not have caused the appearances described to the same extent. There was something besides drowning. From the appearance of the body, death was caused by sudden stoppage of the respiration. This witness had conducted his post-mortem examination at Glasnevin Cemetery. He failed to find any marks of violence on the scalp, but on the right eye and on the right cheek and the right arm there were several abrasions. The eyes were bloodshot. In the lobe of the left ear there was an ear-ring, and in the right the ring and the lobe were wanting. The upper lip was swollen, and the tongue protruded, and was marked by the teeth above and below. Upon the examination of the trachea and the vertebrae of the neck he found nothing remarkable, but there was a deep scratch under the right nipple. There was also an extensive livid mark from the right arm down to the knee, but that was generally presented in dead bodies.

There were appearances on the body that would not be accounted for by drowning alone. The doctor admitted this much, and perhaps this point in his evidence, which was urged in cross-examination, was responsible for the wavering influence on the mind of the jury, to which we shall come by-and-by. The swelling of the vagina and of the lungs, he added, the swelling of the upper lip and the inside of the mouth, were such appearances.

There was a lively scrimmage in court when the physician had completed his evidence. Certainly, at this distant date, we cannot express astonishment that such twaddle might be tolerated. With true Celtic fire Mr. Butt, Q.C., who led the defence, said, as to the evidence of Dr. Hatchell, for the sake of the honourable profession to which that gentleman belonged, he regretted the disgraceful exhibition he had made of himself that day. He submitted that it was due to the case, due to the administration of justice, due to the prisoner at the bar, that some person who assisted at the post-mortem examination, and upon whom the jury could rely, should have been produced, Dr. Hatchell's evidence being of such a nature that they could not, with any regard to their oaths, safely act on it.

The nature of the evidence produced by the Crown was such as to call for the most careful deliberation, and at one time it seemed that the prolonged absence of the jury augured well for the prisoner. After an unusual delay, which produced a most wearying effect, the judge sent for the "twelve good men and true," and inquired whether they were likely to agree. The foreman replied that there did not seem any chance of their agreement, and they again retired. At eleven o'clock they were again summoned, when it was found that they were still unable to come to any determination, and they again withdrew.

The court remained crowded, and the hesitation of the jury caused the most breathless anxiety. At length, near

midnight, the jury came into court and pronounced their verdict of guilty. The prisoner, who throughout the whole proceedings, both in the preliminary investigations and at the trial, had exhibited the utmost firmness, seemed startled, but not appalled, by the verdict, and on being asked whether he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be pronounced against him, addressed the court in a perfectly calm and collected voice, and at considerable length, giving a narrative of what—as he said—had passed on the island, and protesting his entire innocence of the crime.

Mr. Justice Crampton, after stating that himself and Baron Greene—who had also sat on the Bench—perfectly concurred in the correctness of the verdict, passed sentence of death upon the prisoner, holding out not the slightest hope of mercy.

But there came hope!

The result of the trial became the subject of a great controversy throughout the kingdom. It was generally felt that in this instance the circumstantial evidence adduced had failed to prove the crime against the prisoner, and many were of opinion that there was no probability, not to say no proof, that murder had been committed at all, that in truth Mrs. Kirwan had been accidentally drowned, or that, being seized with a fit while bathing, she had perished in the water.

Many circumstances afterwards came to light showing that the evidence of the boatmen had been warped by strong prejudice. On the other hand, the prisoner's treatment of his wife gave occasion to a strong feeling against him, which was greatly aggravated by rumours of other crimes of the deepest dye.

His execution was deferred until the evidence could be sifted further.

A Dublin "daily," commenting upon the case, was evidently unimpressed by this expression of public feeling, for in a leading article it spoke as follows:

"We assume the opinion arrived at by the jury—evidently not without the reluctance natural to merciful men—to be the true one. The conclusion of the prisoner's guilt forces itself on the mind, do what you will to resist it. The almost universal conviction of the public coincides with the opinion of the judge and the verdict of the jury, and, as far as human knowledge and belief are concerned, no one can have any hesitation in saying that the guilt of this murder justly rests on the wretched man who now awaits the final execution of the law.

"It is not singular that a deep, almost an unprecedented sensation has been evoked by this strange case. The circumstances, indeed, were as singular as the crime itself was atrocious. For a brief time the bold bearing of the culprit, and the unaccountably lax procedure of the coroner's inquest, seem to have thrown a cloak over the transaction, and Kirwan, no doubt, hoped that the terrible secret he carried in his bosom was buried there for ever, and that, beyond the stings of his own conscience, he had nothing further to fear. But the present trial adds one more illustration to the many that have preceded it of the great truth that murder can never be concealed. Blood will have blood. It would seem, indeed, that there is a special avenger in cases where one fellow-being, with deliberate purpose and cool preparations, takes away the life of another. No ingenuity can avail to conceal the accursed deed. The safest plan is never without a flaw. Human justice is more than a match for the cunningest criminal, the officers of justice have proved themselves competent to trace out and bring to light the deepest design, and even where secrecy and isolation, as in this instance, are apparently complete, a chain of evidence is providentially forthcoming which fixes the murderer with his guilt, and consigns him to the just penalty of those laws which, in the infatuation of his wickedness, he has so grievously outraged. . . . The mystery in which the crime was for a time enveloped, the revolting nature of the deed, the solitude of the place, the time, the tender relation subsisting between the victim and her murderer, the great nuptial wrongs which she had endured, even her personal beauty and amiable character, all tend to make this one of those great crimes which rouse the indignant feelings of humanity, and make a lasting impression on the minds of the people. For ourselves we must say, with every desire to judge mercifully, of the unhappy man who now awaits his doom in Kilmainham Gaol, with the most painful feelings of commiseration for him, we must still say that of all the atrocious murders of which we ever heard or read, not one exceeds this in revolting and unnatural wickedness."

It is perfectly clear, notwithstanding the strictures established by the foregoing remarks, that the Government authorities hesitated to hurl into eternity the soul of a man upon the evidence which had been relied upon in the case. After a considerable comparing of notes and an earnest investigation, which was some time in being brought to an issue, the sentence was commuted to one of transportation for life.

This mitigation completed the mystery in which the whole case was involved, for it is quite evident that if Kirwan was guilty of the murder he deserved the utmost penalty of the law; but if innocent, the punishment of transportation was a great injustice. This is one of the anomalies of our system of jurisprudence. It is now as in times past, and this case only furnishes a point in the inequality of views on this much vexed subject.

It may have occurred to our readers that the responsibility lies with the particular phase of humour indulged by the Home Office, or rather its presiding genius for the time being; for it is certain that decisions upon this all-important point have invariably been fashioned after the caprices and predilections of the Minister who presides over this department of Government.

Some day, perhaps, the means will be discovered whereby this anachronism may be narrowed down to a definable quantity.

EXECUTIONS IN ROME.

EVERY terrible kind of punishment was formerly inflicted under the criminal laws of Rome for trivial faults. The offender was hoisted up by means of a rope fastened to his arms behind his back, and was then suddenly dropped down with a jerk, by which process his shoulders were generally dislocated; and when this happened to be a labourer or artisan, who was thereby prevented from earning his family's bread, suicide was usually the result. This punishment has now been entirely abolished. It is replaced by the cavaletto, which, though administered on too slight occasions, is not likely to produce such dreadful consequences. The criminal is tied on a table, with his breast downwards, and receives a certain number of blows. He is not stripped for this infliction, but his clothes are drawn so tight by his position that he must feel the instrument of correction almost as acutely as if he were. The cavaletto is applied to those who speak too freely of the Government, who play at quoits or other games at forbidden times, who create disturbances at theatres, or commit other offences of similar magnitude. The spectators of a game are liable to be punished as severely as those who are the actors in it. But the punishment is frequently evaded by playing on the steps or within the precincts of a church, which is a sacred asylum. Strange that religion should step in to shield offenders against the provisions of the laws, made for the sole purpose of preventing religious hours and religious seasons from being profaned! If they braved only their magistrates, nothing could save them; but when they at the same time brave their God they have nothing to fear.

A celebrated traveller to Rome witnessed an execution there in 1818; the culprit was a man who had murdered his father. The murder was discovered in a singular manner. The disappearance of the deceased had given rise to inquiry, and the officers of police went to his cottage, where, on examining his son, they learned that his father had gone to work as usual, a few days before, and had not been seen since. As the officers were continuing their search in the neighbourhood their attention was excited by observing a dog lying in a lone place, who endeavoured to attract their notice by scratching on some new-turned earth. Their curiosity was excited by something peculiar in his action and manner to the spot where they found the body. It would seem that the dog must have been an unobserved witness of his master's murder and had not forsaken his grave. On returning to the cottage with the body the son was so struck with the discovery made by the officers, by means which he could not divine, that, concluding it must have been by supernatural intimation, he made a full confession of his guilt—that he had killed his father with a mallet, at the instigation of his mother, and had dragged him to that lone place, where he buried him. The mother was condemned to imprisonment for life, the son to the guillotine. The execution, which never takes place until the culprit is supposed to be brought to a due state of penitence, was delayed nearly five hours. At last the bell rang, the host was brought from a neighbouring church, that the last sacrament might be administered, and soon afterwards the criminal was led out between two priests, a crucifix and a black banner with death's head upon it being led before them. He mounted the scaffold with a firm step, and did not flinch till he stooped to put his head into the groove prepared to receive it. This was the trying moment, all the rest was but the work of an instant; his head was severed from his body with such rapidity that it seemed to possess sense and consciousness for a few seconds afterwards.

SARAH DAZLEY.

The Female Blue Beard

An unspeakably stupid woman who gave herself away by unrestrained garrulity.

"'Twas not enough
By subtle fraud to snatch a single life."
—FORIENSUS

THE faculty of secretiveness is perhaps more fully developed in woman than in the sterner sex; hence the frequency of the crime of poisoning in the female ranks. In the majority of instances women who adopt poison as the instrument of their diabolical deeds, resort to such means so as to obscure from their sight the horrifying process and progress of their work, although, in its accomplishment, masculine callousness has been far exceeded when woman is responsible. It is, indeed, inconceivable how any such can, apparently with relish, watch the evolution of her cruel acts until the last stage has been reached; and it is impossible to realise what the inner conflict of soul can be, during moments of reflection. The point is scarcely worth pursuing, however. The subsequent caution and cunning stratagems which characterise female delinquencies are a far more interesting study, and how well these matters have been marshalled has been frequently observed when the authorities have been engaged in investigating causes of extreme difficulty.

Usually, as we have observed, the feminine instinct to which we have referred, has been so impregnable that the negation of the accused person has all but nonplussed inquiry, and only some accident, or an unusually well-contrived experiment, has favoured the demands of justice and brought to the light of day the full facts of cases which have been notable for the perplexities which surrounded them.

Sarah Dazley, although graduated, to some extent at least, in the capacity of mystery inherent in her sex, became a martyr to her own loquacity, which she thought would be sufficient to save her from the gallows. And it may be said that in the whole annals of capital crime the evidence in the Wrestlingworth case stands unique, on the merits of the absurd blunders committed by the central figure in the tragedy.

Sarah Dazley, who was described at the time as the "Female Blue Beard," was the daughter of a hairdresser named Reynolds, and passed her early days in the village of Potton, in Bedfordshire. Her father had died some years previously, and her mother, at the time of her conviction, still resided in the same village, and gained a living by dressmaking. The young woman's prospects were then very favourable, and at the early age of eighteen she married a young man two years older than herself, named Mead, at Tadlow, who, at the time, was in the service of the reverend clergyman of the parish.

They lived happy for some time, and were blessed with a daughter. Suddenly a disagreement took place between them, and Mead suddenly became ill. He was confined but a few days to his bed, when he was seized with most violent pains in the stomach, but almost as soon died, and the daughter, a short time afterwards, died under similar circumstances. This took place in the year 1840.

It is necessary to state that a few months before their death, the subject of our sketch became acquainted with the most depraved characters, and, accordingly, led a life of complete debauchery.

Some five months afterwards she married Dazley, the ceremony being performed at Wrestlingworth Parish Church. They led a life of extreme profligacy. In about two years after the marriage, in the month of October, her husband was taken seriously ill, and expired under the most acute sufferings in as precisely a similar manner as the former unfortunate beings.

Although much suspicion was felt in the neighbourhood at the time, no judicial proceedings were adopted until the month of February, when it was reported that she was about to marry a third husband. This was found to be correct, as the banns had been published in the neighbouring parish church. The magistrates, hearing of the rumours, and going into the facts which were laid before them, issued an order for the body of Dazley to be exhumed—a course which was presumably within the province of the magistracy at the period—upon hearing of which the woman absconded from Wrestlingworth.

Upon the body undergoing a post-mortem examination, and the contents of the stomach analysed, it was discovered that his death had been occasioned from the effects of arsenic.

A warrant was immediately issued for her apprehension, and several officers succeeded in capturing her at Broken Wharf, Upper Thames Street, near Southwark Bridge, where she was anxiously waiting to see a friend in order to proceed to Bristol. The young man to whom she was to have been united, on hearing of the reports, instantly discarded her from his thoughts of marriage, she at the same time declaring her innocence.

She was on the following day after her apprehension taken before the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House, who ordered her removal to Wrestlingworth, where the coroner's inquest was being held.

Notwithstanding all the suspicious surroundings of the case, the coroner had sapiently concluded that the circumstances were not sufficiently definite to justify his interference; but external pressure induced that gentleman to alter his opinion, the result of which was that a verdict of wilful murder was returned against the woman, who was, as we have seen, apprehended. Primarily, the proceedings which were now instituted had to do with the death of the deceased man Dazley, whose dead body was put into the hands of two surgeons in Bedford, and underwent a minute examination.

It appeared that whilst the head and face and the extremities were decomposed to a very great extent, the stomach and intestines were as fresh as if the man had been dead only a few days. The muscles of the stomach were undecomposed, and the stomach itself was of a light, florid hue, showing, indeed, round, red patches, indicating the presence of some metallic poison. Upon one of the intestines they observed a small quantity of white powder, and an ulcerated opening in the bowels, through which it had escaped. The stomach was removed, and its contents subjected to a careful analysis, and the result left no doubt that the man had died of poison, and that poison arsenic.

In the course of the trial, at the Bedford Assizes, it appeared, as we have already cursorily observed, that the deceased was very suddenly seized with pains in his stomach, and the prisoner called Mr. Sandell, a surgeon, to his assistance. Proper medicines were administered, and he was put to bed.

During the day and night, and a portion of the following day he continued very ill, vomiting violently, and in great pain. On Tuesday he got better, and in the morning of Wednesday he was almost well.

It appeared by the evidence of one Ann Mead, a niece of the prisoner, who lived with her and her husband, that in the forenoon of that day the prisoner made three pills, which she wrapped in a piece of newspaper, and which paper she placed in her pocket. A Mrs. Carver proved that shortly after the making of the pills she and the prisoner went to Mr. Sandell's, and that the prisoner told him her husband could not be made to take his draughts, and requested him to give her some pills instead; and the doctor, after some demur, gave her three pills in a small box.

Having procured them, the women returned home, and on their way the prisoner took the pill-box out of her pocket, threw Mr. Sandell's pills into a ditch, and put in their place three others, which she took from her pocket, wrapped in the piece of newspaper of which Ann Mead spoke. These pills, she told Mrs. Carver, she had bought at a Mrs. Gurry's, who, it appears, kept a small chandler's shop in the village, and who was licensed to sell medicines.

Having changed the pills, she proceeded home, and desired her husband to take one or two of them, which he refused to do, saying he could not swallow them.

The prisoner then left the house for some purpose, and during her absence her niece, Ann Mead, requested the deceased to take the pills, and, at the same time, took one herself, saying to him, "See how I'll swallow it!" Upon which he also took one.

In an hour afterwards the deceased and his niece were taken ill; they were extremely sick, and complained of an

intense burning pain in the throat and stomach, and on the return of the prisoner to the house she scolded the niece for having been so foolish as to meddle with the pills.

The deceased and the niece continued very ill during the night and the following day, constantly vomiting and in great pain. On Saturday following he got better, and sat up for an hour. In the afternoon the prisoner went again to Mr. Sandell's, and told him that her husband was bad, and requested him to send some medicine to relieve him; and he accordingly gave her a powder, consisting of rhubarb, tartrate of soda, and ginger, which he desired should be taken immediately. It appeared that she returned home, and about half-past nine o'clock at night went up to the room in which her husband was in bed, and took a small packet from her bosom. This contained some very white powder, which she falsely told her husband she had got from Mr. Sandell's, that which he had really given her being of a dark yellow, and that which she took from her bosom

SHE STIRRED IT UP AND GAVE IT TO HIM TO DRINK.

being a pure white. This powder she then put into a teacup in the presence of her husband's two brothers, and, pouring some water into the cup, she stirred up the mixture, and gave it to him to drink. He at first refused to drink it; but, upon her telling him it came from Mr. Sandell's, and that he had said "it would soon make him either better or worse," he drank it off.

An hour afterwards he began to vomit with dreadful violence, complaining at the same time of burning pains and thirst, and in this state he remained until four o'clock on the following morning. At that hour the sickness ceased; but he continued in intense pain until half-past five, when death put an end to his sufferings.

It did not appear that the parties lived otherwise than happily together generally; but on one occasion, about ten days before he was first taken ill, they quarrelled and fought with great fury, and after it was over she swore at him, and told him "she would do for him some time or other."

Two days before he was taken ill, and whilst he was in his usual state of tolerable health, she told a neighbour that "her husband grew short of breath, and it was her opinion he would soon be taken ill," an expression which was remembered against her when her prophecy was so shortly afterwards fulfilled by his actual and fatal illness.

There was at that time living in the village of Wrestlingworth a carpenter of the name of Waldock, and in the summer of the preceding year, in answer to a question put by him to the prisoner as to how she liked being married, she replied, "Oh, very well. I have got a good husband, but I wish he was dead. I think he'll soon be in the churchyard, and I shall be happy to follow him there." This Waldock and the prisoner had been fellow-servants, and shortly after her husband's death he paid court to her, and they agreed to be married. These circumstances have been already referred to in our introductory part. We shall, therefore, pass on to an incident in the neighbourhood of the publication of the banns which should not be omitted. When these had been published, Waldock called upon her, and in alluding to certain rumours that had been commenced that she had poisoned her late husband, asked her some questions about herself, and particularly whether she remembered the speech she made to him in the summer as to wishing her husband dead. She replied, "Why; do you think I murdered the man?"

He told her that he did not suspect that, but asked her if she recollected the fight she had with the deceased before his death, and the threats she then used, to which she answered she did, and that he struck her, and "she'd be —— if she would not do for any man that ever hit her." Waldock then said, "But you don't mean, then, to say that you did poison him?" and she answered, "No, I did not; but I never afterwards took him his dinner, or gave him any beer for his supper, and I never would if he had lived for twenty years."

We come now to the point where Sarah Dazley was arrested in London, and her departure, in custody, from London, after the formal investigation before the Lord Mayor. We are made acquainted with a very strange method of conveying a prisoner from place to place, as it appeared to be at that time. On the way down the captive slept at the Swan at Biggleswade, with two of the female servants. The chronicler is very precise in his details. Whilst the latter were undressing, she requested them to make haste, and she would tell them all about it. When they were in bed, she

gave them the history of her husband's illness, and the part she took in it, declaring solemnly that she was innocent of his death.

After this they dropped off to sleep. In about an hour she awoke them, and asked one of them this question:

"Do they hang people now so much as they did?" One of the girls replied that she did not know, but she believed they did not, except the case was very clear.

The prisoner then said, "Well, there's one thing, they can't prove where I bought the poison; and there's another, they can't prove that anyone saw me give him the poison," and then they all composed themselves to sleep again.

At the trial a chemist of the name of Worman proved that the prisoner had bought a pennyworth of arsenic—from half-an-ounce to an ounce—at his shop about eleven months previously; and another chemist, one Burnham, sold her the same quantity about the fall of the year, but could not say whether the transaction took place before or after the date of the husband's death.

One point in the statement of the case must be recorded. On the day after Dazley was first taken ill, the contents of the utensil in which he had vomited were emptied into the front yard, and subsequently a pig was found dead near the place, with its body greatly swollen. The prisoner was told of this, and answered, "How could you empty it there? Put the next in the back-yard, where no cattle can get to it."

It was suggested that even then the deceased had had arsenic administered by somebody, and that the pills she made on the following Wednesday contained arsenic.

Having once asserted that she would have seven husbands in seven years, and being asked if she had ever said so, she replied, "No, I did not say any such thing. What I did say was that I would have seven in ten years."

The evidence having been given, there was little work left to do, and although Mr. Baron Alderson recapitulated the evidence at great length, the jury, who had been requested to retire to a private room, returned into the court-house almost immediately with a verdict of guilty, and the prisoner was sentenced to death.

Generally, the wretched woman had displayed the most complete indifference, varied at times by levity, and an airiness very uncommon for a woman in her position; but this conduct may be attributed to those habits contracted by her through the mode of living she adopted, and which we have already described.

She, however, eventually modified this unseemly attitude, and completely broke down. On the morning of execution the scene was indescribable as the wretched creature was conveyed to the gallows. Her screams were heartrending, and men of apparent stoutness and bravery, who were employed in the grim task, appeared to "give way," and the proceedings were very considerably hindered by local circumstances. Thousands of people had of course assembled to see the sight, but of these there were none to exhibit any outward manifestations of sympathy for their fellow-human, whose exhibitions on the platform were at full view.

None, did we say? There was one. A piercing shriek and a prolonged wailing from the centre of the crowd momentarily hushed the clamour of the multitude. These strange sounds, as though of supernatural emanation, synchronised with the crushed emotions of the unhappy woman placed beneath the lethal beam; the harmony was made ethereal in the sense that it was the agonised cry of a mother for her erring child!

The Convicts' Theatre.

THE convict establishment at Irkutsk is the only prison in Siberia that possesses a theatre. A traveller visited the prison and found in a big upper room stage and scenery and drop-curtain complete. This, he observes, was luxury indeed.

"I cannot give you a special performance," said the governor, "but we are very proud of our singing here; would you like to hear it?"

We sat down and smoked cigarettes while a messenger was sent to hunt up half-a-dozen singers.

They came in their prison garb, six intelligent-looking men, and they sang three part-songs as finely and with as much verve and expression as many a renowned choir.

A WHIMSICAL mistake was made many years ago by a country schoolmaster, who was employed to pen a petitionary address to a chief magistrate, whose circumference was somewhere about six feet seven inches in girth. Thus was the petition to this great man addressed: "To the Mare and boddy corpulent"!

The Gallows at Eighty-Four

"But when he saw his face, which now to ghastly death resign'd,
His face which pale in wondrous sort did looke; he wofull stands,
And pityfully bewayles and up with grief doth cast his eyes."

—VIRGIL, "Æneid."

ALLAN MAIR was born five weeks after the death of his father. His mother having married again, he left the paternal dwelling at nine years of age. The Mair family, thinking he was lost, advertised him in the newspapers of the day, the knowledge of which afterwards reached him, but did not bring him home.

He had gone to England at that early age, where he remained, employed as a drover, for twenty-five years.

He was next employed to conduct a hundred and sixty merino sheep, belonging to the Earl of Selkirk, to his settlement upon the Red River, in North America. For this job he received a hundred and sixty guineas. After remaining there for a few weeks, he made his way to New York, where he got into the employment of a Mr. Lloyd, an extensive dealer and shipper. He was employed by him principally in buying grain to be ground into flour. Here he was doing well, and saving money, and getting every day more into the confidence of his master. He was then placed on shipboard, in one of Mr. Lloyd's ships, as supercargo. This vessel traded regularly between New York and Kingston, in Jamaica.

He continued in this trade upwards of four years, when, by some means, he had learned that his mother was engaged in some lawsuit. He then returned to Scotland, bringing with him two thousand guineas, which all went to the lawyers in a very short time; and this loss, while it directed his mind to litigation, at the same time rendered him sour and misanthropic.

Such was the history of Allan Mair from his origin to the conclusion of his more prosperous experience in the walks of life.

At the age of eighty-four he performed one of the most diabolical outrages upon Mary Fletcher, or Mair, his reputed wife, who was his senior by one year; and on the 13th September, 1843, he was brought up on the charge of murder at the Justiciary Court in Stirling. The interest of the case lay in the age of the parties.

It was stated that he kept the unfortunate woman short of food, although he did not want for it himself; and he had been heard to abuse her, "wishing she was in hell and her soul burning."

On the night of the 14th of May preceding, a neighbour heard the old man beating Mary, as if with a hammer, and saying that he would "make her put in the sneck of the bed." This was in allusion to a box-bed, probably let into a recess in the wall like a cupboard, and closed with a door, of which the "sneck" would be the hasp. The old woman was heard to say, "Let me lie and die in peace, and don't strike me any more!"

Next day he went to the Manse, as he said, "to tell the minister to make a snuff-box for Mary."

The old woman was found crouched up at the foot of the bed, covered with bruises and with blood; and she died of her wounds.

The facts that were adduced in connection with the case were few, and the jury found very little difficulty in arriving at their verdict.

The old man, hale and hearty, assumed an attitude of extreme indifference throughout the proceedings. Hardened by the rough experience and the excitements of his earlier career, he manifested a "front" which was little short of the marvellous in a body of such advanced years. The levity which he displayed in his treatment of his aged partner and his final disposal of her was maintained at the hearing of the case, and the coarseness of his demeanour at the time elicited no sentiments of pity for him, although his great age saved him from any resentful demonstration.

As the time for his execution approached his bravado underwent an entire change. The awfulness of his position seemed to come to him with violent emotions. He retired

to bed on the eve of his execution at eleven o'clock. About two o'clock in the morning he awoke, and, hearing the noise and bustle made by the workmen on the exterior of the prison, he anxiously inquired as to the cause of the commotion, and upon being informed, he exclaimed, "Oh, ay! they're putting up the gibbet. What a horrible thing to be hanged like a dog!"

He then fell into a disturbed sleep, from which the striking of every hour disturbed him, and he would exclaim, "That's an hour less that I have to live!"

At the time for rising, he was with difficulty persuaded to dress. He then took farewell of the governor of the prison, and thanked him warmly for the kindness and attention with which he had treated him. As the hour approached he became very restless, and on leaving the cell was very much agitated, and wept bitterly. During the customary religious exercises he wept much, the tears streaming through his bony fingers when he pressed them to his face, and every now and then he wrung his hands. After the exercises had been concluded, a glass of wine was brought to him, but he resolutely refused it, declaring that "he would not go into the presence of God Almighty drunk." Here the executioner, who was singularly attired in a light jacket and trousers, seamed with red and black, and a huge black crape mask, entered the room. On seeing this appallingly strange figure, Mair started back, and every limb appeared to quiver with the intensity of his terror. The executioner then advanced to pinion him; but Mair shrank away, evidently alarmed at his approach.

On the rope being passed round his arms, he complained that it was hurting him. "Oh, dinna hurt me—dinna hurt me!" said he. "I am auld—I'll mak nae resistance! An' oh, when I gang to the gibbet, dinna keep me lang; just fling me off at once!" After some difficulty, he was pinioned, and the mournful procession being formed, he was led out between two officers to the scaffold.

On emerging from the Court-house, and when the gibbet and the immense crowd met his gaze, he held down his head and groaned piteously, "Oh, Lord! oh, Lord!" He was instantly led to the drop, and then harangued the crowd as follows:

"I hope you will listen attentively to what I am now about to say to you, as this is the first time I have been permitted to tell my mind to the public. I have been most unjustly condemned, through false swearing, and here I pray that God may send His curse upon all connected with my trial. I curse the witnesses with all the curses of the hundred-and-ninth Psalm. There is one person connected with the parish who brought in false witness to condemn an innocent man. When in prison, this person came to visit me; but I told him that it was a wonder the God of Heaven did not rain down fire and brimstone upon him as He did upon Sodom and Gomorrah. He it was who brought false witness against me—who brought Roman Catholics, who worship stocks and stones, and others, to swear my life away; but God will curse and everlastingly damn them!"

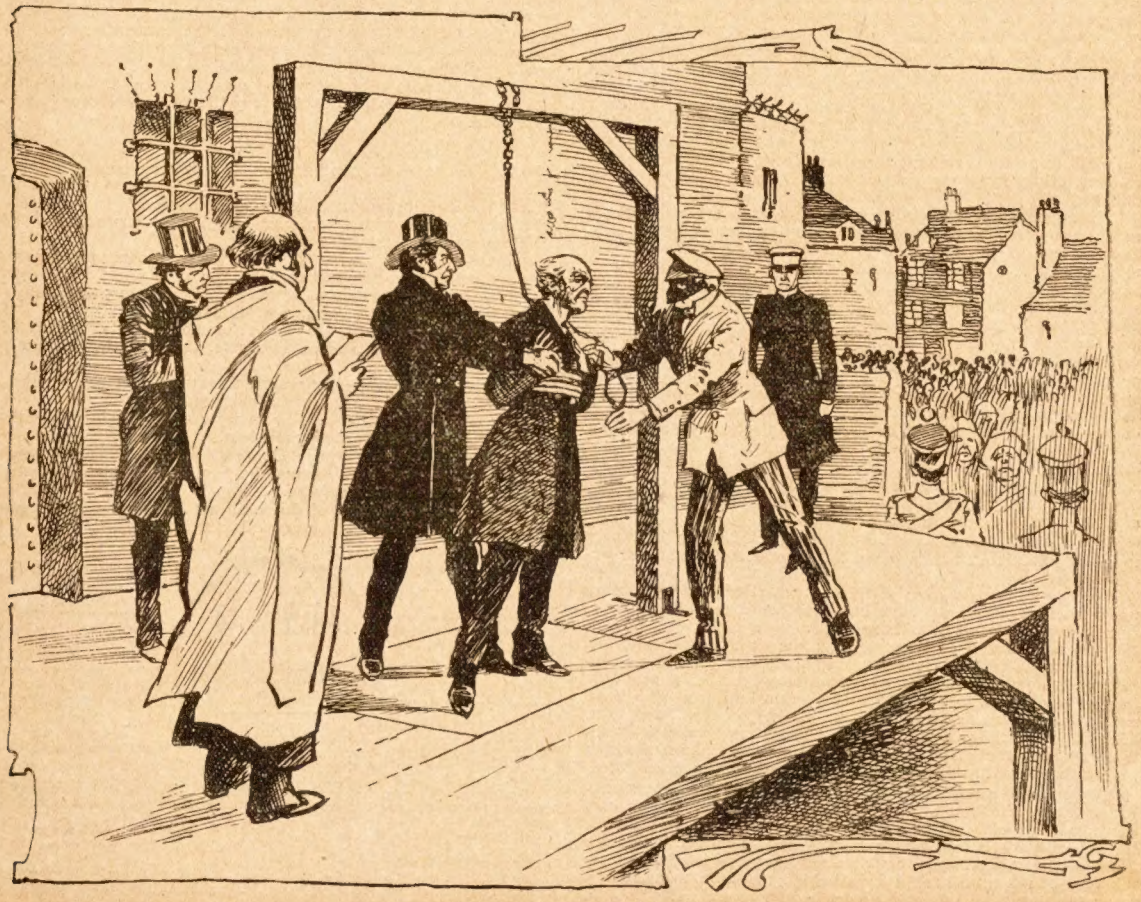
After going on in a similar strain for a minute or two, he paused for a little space, upon which the executioner, thinking he had concluded, stepped forward and inquired if he had done.

"No, sir, not yet!" replied he warmly. And, lifting up his clenched hand and striking it violently on his knee, "I'm not done! I'll say much more if they will allow me!" And he went on with the same mixture of asseveration and curses for about five minutes more.

Then there was prayer. The minister bade him farewell, when the miserable convict stretched out his hand, saying, "Farewell, sir, farewell! I'll soon be in eternity!"

The executioner put the cap on the old man's head, adjusted the rope, and while the culprit was in the act of exclaiming, "May God be——" the fatal bolt was withdrawn, and the wretched old man, uttering a heavy groan, was launched into eternity.

For a moment he raised one of his hands, which had not been properly pinioned, to the back of his neck, seized the rope convulsively, and endeavoured to save himself; but his grasp instantly relaxed, and after struggling violently for some time, he ceased to exist.



HE WAS INSTANTLY LED TO THE DROP.

Criminal Problems

ENVIRONMENT A CAUSE OF CRIME.

HAVING noticed the effect which heredity has on the population, and the factor which it is in determining the development or repression of the criminal instinct, we come naturally to the second great cause of criminality, namely, Environment. That the surroundings in which a child passes its days have a great influence on its character few will deny. The offspring of educated parents forms in early youth habits of cleanliness, and the absence of the daily bath is keenly felt, but the labourer does not miss his morning ablutions solely because he has not been taught to wash with frequency. The man of culture finds it almost impossible to eat with unwashed hands, but the navvy—in every way as fine a man—feeds with gusto, albeit his hands are begrimed with dirt. Why is this? Purely the result of environment.

To consider the force of circumstances in the formation of criminals, we must have recourse to statistics. A glance at tables of convictions shows one immediately that more miscreants are convicted between the ages of twenty and thirty than in any other decade of life, and from this it has been argued that it is between those ages that the greatest care should be exercied by the law-giver, and inasmuch as it is then that the impulse for wrong-doing is strongest and in many cases arises. But those who take up this position forget that many of the convicts who have been sent to gaol when aged from twenty to thirty have been previously convicted, and that, therefore, it may safely be concluded that their inclination to commit crime was developed earlier in life.

To our mind a list of the ages at which first convictions have taken place is a much more reliable guide in determining the period when wicked impressions are most readily received and when temptation is most easily succumbed to.

The Rev. H. L. Elliot, one of the foremost workers for the reformation of the youthful offender, has examined a thousand cases of first conviction, and has classified the results. He finds that between the ages of nine and twenty, 395 children were convicted; in the following ten years 339 adults first fell into the hands of the police; between thirty and forty years of age 151 persons made their first fatal step in crime; while at ages ranging above forty 115 prisoners in all were found guilty of offences.

This table shows us conclusively that it is the impressions received in childhood which are strongest, and lead one to deplore that at present there is no recognised method of removing children from pernicious influence, where the same is known to exist. The causes of this youthful beginning of immorality are: vicious and neglectful parents, absence of one or both parents in gaol, loss of parents, together with great facilities for making immoral acquaintance. More than this, the very conditions of life under which the children of the very poor live cause offences to be regarded differently. The child of the rich sees a pear which it covets, and when the parents' backs are turned annexes the same. Result, corporal correction on the seat of wisdom. The gamin in the streets, famished with hunger and cold, casts his eyes on a bun or a scrap of bread. The temptation is too strong and the hardened criminal steals the morsel of food, with the result that another case goes before the magistrate next morning and another friendless mortal is launched on the sea of crime.

It is absurd to expect the uninstructed child of ten or twelve to resist temptation which his carefully-educated comrade succumbs to.

To return to our statistics: The 395 cases of first conviction under the age of twenty have been further divided into years, and it is proved that it is between the ages of 15 and 19 that children are most easily led astray, the two most dangerous years being 16, with 72 convictions, and 18, with 75 of the same. The preponderance of crime at these two ages being probably due to the fact that it is about then that children who have natural protectors first escape from parental control, and that, accordingly, the figures must be discounted to a certain extent to allow for the cases of hereditary vicious instincts which parents have tried to eradicate in their offspring, but have failed.

The parental question is important, for, from the figures published by the Director of Reformatories, it has been shown that out of all the children sent to these compulsory schools to be trained in ways of righteousness only 41.2 per cent. had both father and mother living, but that, in every one of these cases the very people who should have helped the child to become a respectable member of society have been incapable of doing so, either from laziness, incompatibility of temper, or drunken habits.

Here is a problem which the State will have to take cognisance of sooner or later. It is estimated that the misdemeanant, as distinct from the convict—that is to say, the individual who is sent to hard labour for a short term—costs the nation thirty pounds per head per year. Allowing for four years in that class, each member of the immense army of petty offenders, therefore, puts the ratepayers to the unnecessary expense of £120. Did the Government obtain control of those who from their environment are certain to become criminals about half of this expenditure would be avoided, to say nothing of providing the country with a large number of useful, wage-earning citizens, whose joint energy would more than recoup the State for the small initial outlay requisite for education.

LEAVES FROM . . OUR NOTEBOOK

ONE of the most deadly trees in the world is to be found in Madagascar, where it is known as the tangen tree. By the natives it was the custom to use the fruit of the tangen for the purpose of ascertaining whether criminals charged with grave offences were guilty or not. As there is a great deal of poison in the fruit it can readily be seen that very few—if, indeed, any—were able to pass through this ordeal unscathed. Some criminals who had great political influence or wealth managed to escape through the connivance of the Judges. More civilised methods of jurisdiction now prevail in Madagascar, but the tangen tree is regarded with almost as much aversion as it ever was.

AN old way of poisoning criminals was to compel them to swallow large quantities of bull's blood. It is interesting to note how this acted as a means of causing death. Bull's blood is not a poison at all in the ordinary sense of the word, but when it enters the stomach it forms a coagulum, and instead of the organ being filled with liquid, which might be ejected by vomiting, it is filled with a solid mass. This mass presses upward upon the heart, and displaces it. The pressure upward upon the lungs interferes with the respiration, and the pressure backward upon the aorta, cava, and the solar plexus would probably be sufficient to cause death. The same thing occurs in animals when they are first turned out among the clover; they overeat, and are very likely to die from overdistension.

VERY curious is the almanac which has been published by a foreign criminologist. It is entitled the "Almanac of Crime," and its object is to indicate those periods in each year when the various crimes are most likely to be committed.

Here are some extracts:

"Murder.—Many cases of this crime occur in August, January, and June; few in February, November, and December.

"Infanticide.—Dangerous periods are February and May; very few cases occur in September and December

"Poisoning.—May is the favourite month for criminals of this type; during September, as a rule, they remain absolutely idle.

"Threats of Death.—Many such threats are made in August, and few in February, May, and November.

"Perjury.—December and February are the two months during which this crime is most prevalent.

"Forgery.—During April, October, and December forgers are most busy, and also during the first days of every quarter and the last days of every year.

"Theft.—More crimes of this kind are committed in December and January than during any other months of the year."

Answers to Correspondents

The Editor will be pleased to answer any suitable questions.

BRIGHTON.—We only deal with matter connected directly with crimes. We cannot write on banking because banks are robbed. Your proposal is equally preposterous.

PENMAN.—Undoubtedly the authorities would object if we gave too explicit directions for coining. To possess a bad coin is, strictly speaking, punishable. Don't meddle with edged tools.

CARLISLE.—In the columns of the *Police Budget* you would have seen a description of the matter you mention. You may not copy a bank note even to prove your skill as an engraver.

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